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# Akhand Jyoti

*Akhand Jyoti is not merely a magazine. It is an embodiment of my soul.*

*- Pandit Shriram Sharma Acharya*

The Light Divine



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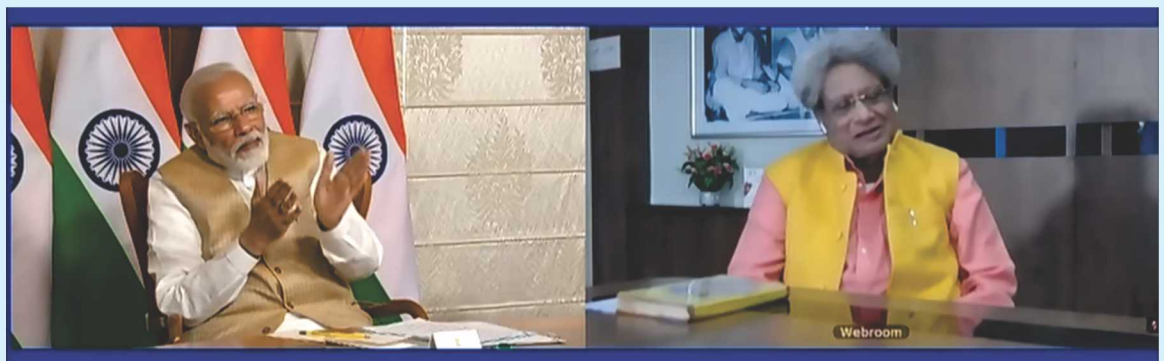
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### **PM Modi asks Gayatri Pariwar Head to create awareness on coronavirus**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on March 30, 2020, spoke to Gayatri Pariwar Head, Dr. Pranav Pandya, via video-conference, soliciting his help in creating awareness about COVID-19. 'Being a physician by training, you can educate people about the scientific ways in which they can save themselves from coronavirus,' Modi told him.

Dr. Pandya assured the Prime Minister of all possible help to contain the spread of the pandemic. He also apprised Modi on the steps being taken by Gayatri Pariwar to provide food packets to stranded people during the ongoing lockdown.

PM Modi talked to Dr. Pandya as part of his discussions on the corona virus situation with spiritual leaders, including Yoga guru Ramdev, Shri Shri Ravishankar, and Jaggi Vasudev.

॥ Om bhūrbhuvah svaḥ tatsaviturvareṇyam bhargo devasya dhimahi dhiyo yo naḥ pracodayāt ॥  
(May Almighty illuminate our intellect and inspire us towards the righteous path)

- Rigveda 3/62/10; Samveda 13/4/3, Yajurveda 3/35, 22/9, 30/2, 36/3



# Akhand Jyoti

The Light Divine

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Amrit Chintan

## Strive to Augment Vital Power

Life is a continuum of struggles of varying degrees. One has to fight with diverse, unfavorable situations and troubles every day. The success of life lies in proceeding ahead against all the odds. This appears to be the case with the growth of every living being. Despite enormous gifts of Nature, there also appear enemies and hardships surrounding us in one form or the other. “Survival of the fittest” is a bitter truth in this world. The weaker is prey to the stronger; big fishes eat the tiny ones; sparrows eat insects; hawks eat sparrows. Huge trees grab the food of the small plants around them; the rich men exploit the poor and the mightier rule over the meek. What do these real-world examples teach us? If we do not want to let ourselves be ruined by adversities or be exploited by others and want to live with dignity, we must be alert about eliminating our weaknesses. We should have the courage, vigor, and vitality to fight for our legitimate needs. In essence, we must strive to earn and augment physical, mental, and spiritual power to live a happy and healthy life.

- Param Pujya Gurudev Pandit Shriram Sharma Acharya



Life is ever reaching for strength, vitality, survival, and the fulfillment of perpetuating its inherent message of continuance. - **Bryant McGill**



AKHAND JYOTI

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The amount of dynamic energy and physical strength that a person possesses frequently influences the character of their mental and psychological disposition. - **Kilroy J. Oldster**



## Time has Taught Us that Our Existence and Health are Prime

A human being is considered the most thoughtful, wisest, and superior most living species on Earth. On the flip side, it is difficult to search a creature who is so foolish, insensitive, and selfish than a human being. Yugrishi Pandit Shriram Sharma Acharya has illustrated this fact, giving several examples, in his book titled 'Samajhadaron ki nasamajhi' (Folly of the wise). Some excerpts are given as follows:

'All the creatures following the discipline of nature normally remain disease-free. Only human beings have created different types of diseases for themselves as well as domestic animals.'

'All the living beings, fulfilling their needs of hunger and reproduction, keep harmony among themselves. Only the humankind, to fulfill its untamed desires, commits heinous crimes, and creates conditions of conflicts and wars.'

'In fact, such cruel tendencies of human beings have eliminated several species of animals and plants. In the guise of security and prosperity, they have developed weapons of mass destruction and polluted water, air,

and earth. Such activities have put the entire planet in danger.'

'The environmental specialists and other global organizations looking after humanitarian issues have warned several times for restraining this madness and also highlighted impending dangers. Still, humans have not stopped their arrogance.'

Under such circumstances, Nature takes corrective action. In this context, Pujya Gurudev has written: 'When knowledge, wisdom, logic, and propriety don't succeed in persuading people to follow the righteous path, then the blows of harsh punishment correct everything in a short time. It is essential to change man's accumulated evil-impressions and stubbornness. One can see the naked dance of greedy people indulging obstinately in improper behavior. In order to deal with this catastrophe of rampant evil practices, Nature is going to organize Tandava-Nrutya (dance of destruction) to liberate this Earth.' (Vangmay 29, page 1.49)

It has been observed that wise people can be made to change their harmful habits/traits by persuading them or by making them aware of the consequences of such habits/traits. But the foolish and stubborn people will not abandon their importunity. In such cases, the proverb 'There is always a crook to outsmart another crook' proves right. In the normal course, when the illegal work is done silently, the Shiva element of Nature (responsible for the destruction of Ashiva), punishes lightly. But when the criminals/sinners openly, fearlessly and shamelessly commit crimes, then Shiva does their treatment by incarnating in Tandava mode. The process of Shiva's Tandava is implemented only under such a constraint.



It is health that is real wealth and not pieces of gold and silver.

- Mahatma Gandhi





People not realizing the impending dangers of playing with Nature have been alerted by the outbreak of Corona (Covid-19) virus pandemic. They have been made to understand, at one fell swoop, that the survival of humans and humanity are more significant than their narrow comforts and selfish desires.

At present, it seems that the blind race for money has suddenly stopped. All the immoral activities in the guise of entertainment have been quieted. The cordial relations with neglected kins and neighbors have been rekindled. The commitment to self-discipline and self-control has been re-awakened. The human empathy that became dormant due to egoistic nature has got a chance to re-evolve. The tendency of exploitation has been tamed, and the philanthropic activities of helping others in the times of need have taken a lead role.

However, the good efforts of understanding the humane values and putting them into practice that have started now should continue so that another pandemic or catastrophe does not fall on us. In that case, Nature would take harsher steps for the benefit of humanity.

Yugrishi has written – ‘Making mistakes is not so bad as being reluctant to accept and rectify them.’ The humankind, in the intoxication of its successes, started ignoring the rules of Nature. Therefore, in place of self-control, empathy, and cooperation, wayward tendencies took reigns of the human psyche. Now, in the hour of crisis, people are realizing the importance of these

virtues. Therefore, some concrete steps should be taken so that these qualities become part of our daily habits. Even if ideal harmony between individuals and society or Nature is not possible, at least some minimum balance is undoubtedly required. In this context, Yugrishi has given an easy to implement formula: ‘Individual interests and happiness should not be given priority over collective interests and benefits.’

The Corona pandemic has taught us that our existence and health are prime. The survival of humans and humanity is possible only through global caring and sharing. If everyone willingly contributes, in some way or the other, towards this common goal, then a strong background for saving ourselves from possible future disasters can be made.

With prayer-filled wishes for the welfare of all,



(Pranav Pandya)

At this time, there is a disease that affects and does so without distinguishing borders, nationalities, skin color, or social status. And this is a great first lesson in life. He tells us - as it should - that we are all the same. Diversity and distinctions are the fruit of our limited and limiting mind, the apotheosis of our finitude. We are facing a pandemic that, in order to be addressed, requires a strong sense of personal responsibility and collaboration between communities. It requires a counter-current gesture, of altruism, in an individualistic society, in which everyone thinks for himself and defends his goods. And this is a second life lesson.

- Corina Abdulahm Negura



Those who think they have no time for healthy eating will sooner or later have to find time for illness. - **Edward Stanley**



# The Present Crisis in an Indication of the Dawn of New Era

An Assurance to Global Community by Yugrishi Pandit Shriram Sharma Acharya:  
Excerpts from His Discourse Delivered in 1986.

The circumstances in which you are living today will not remain so in the coming days. There is going to be a drastic change in them. Two tasks will be carried out simultaneously: Destruction and Creation. You will witness the devastation all over the world. You will be alive to see it. I, too, will be there but in the subtle form. (Acharyashri voluntarily shed his physical sheath in 1990.) I will be on the battlefield with my subtle body. I, too, will go on fighting along with you during this transition period.

What will happen during this time? There will be disasters. You, too, will not be spared by the trials and tribulations in this period. You may think that you have a home, business, job, etc., so you will not suffer even if the whole world does. You should know when the thunderstorms or the fierce gales strike, no man remains safe. In fact, Nature is very angry with us. You are witnessing high

temperatures in winter and cold in summer; either there are heavy rains and floods or no rains and droughts. That is to say, Nature may create such problems that you may not even get bread and butter.

When the pandemics spread, doctors say that they have not read or heard about them; that they were not taught about them. What medicine can they prescribe? Such pandemics are going to strike again and again. We are surrounded by the outburst/fury of Nature. We are surrounded by poison, by the shortage of daily necessities, by inflation and by corruption. In such testing times, I am worried about two categories of people. One is my soul-kins – who are my disciples of the Gayatri Pariwar. Now (in 1986), they are twenty-four lakhs in number. They are like my own children to me. I have divided my earned spiritual power into two parts. One part is to be used for the welfare of the entire world, and the other is for my soul-kins – the Gayatri Pariwar fraternity. Now I am divided into two halves. The twenty-four lakhs people are my family members, and the remaining five hundred crores of the human race are not precisely family members, but they are my relatives, neighbors, and friends. This entire human race is like – ‘Amtavat sarvabhuteshu’. They appear to me like my own soul. ‘Vasudhaiv kutumbakam’ – This world is like my own family. I will save you and save the world. I



It is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change. – **Charles Darwin**



am not a scholar. I am a Tapasvi (an ascetic). Since my childhood to date, I have lived the life of a Tapasvi. Therefore, whatever spiritual power a Tapasvi should possess, I own that.

This world is passing through an unprecedented turmoil. So what would I do? I would gather all the countries on one platform, and make a Chakravarti kingdom. That is, all the states would merge together to form a single global nation free of the narrow (and selfish) boundaries of 'nationalism' that are the root cause of all conflicts and wars across the globe. The entire planet would have one religion – Humanity. There would be one management. The setup would be such that all are equal, and they would have equal rights. They would live like a larger-family. I have made a larger family (Gayatri Pariwar) in my life, and I am now preparing to knit the whole world as a family.

How will I do without Guruji? – You may ask. My son! I will come to your home, and I will take care of you and your family. My state is such that I can live with you. Like a physician, surgeon, or nurse, I would cure the patients. The testing times that I see coming would be perilous. I would not only protect you like an umbrella but also try, as much as possible, to make your future as well as the future of your family members bright. This is how I am going to utilize my fifty percent power.

With the remaining fifty percent, I will transform this world into heaven. Will you fight? – You may ask. Yes, I would fight. A foundation is dug first before the house is built. There is going to be a lot of struggle in digging the foundation. If I talk to other

people as I am talking to you, would they believe me? Then what should be done? They have to be taught in the language, they better understand. Those who do not understand without threat, I will compel them too. I would make them realize by power. Those who understand by gentle means, I would make comprehend by gentle means.

All the countries of the world are to be united. How gigantic is this task? The 'haves' have grabbed the land, and 'have-nots' have nothing to use. This inequality has to be removed. All the people would share equally and live joyfully. This opportunity of caring and sharing must be given to all. In a family, there is one management, and each member has a share in the total earnings. I nourish a dream of making the world like a family. If there is a need for demolition, I will do that also. Great power is indwelling within me, which, when witnesses corruption, immorality, impropriety, and injustice, it shakes me and asks me to fight against it. Who am I? You may call me a warrior. I have to create, and I also have to destroy at the same time.



Progress is impossible without change, and those who cannot change their minds cannot change anything. – **George Bernard Shaw**





I would use my power in breaking as well as making. All this is to be done for the welfare of the world. And what about you? I would look after you as well as uplift you. I would not let hardships unnerve you. I would make you rise on all the fronts. On the money front as well? My son! In the coming days, no one would be able to accumulate gold bars in one's home. Even now, the rich men's homes are being raided. In the future, the raids would be more intense.

Moreover, there would be no fiat money in those days, so how could I give you the same. I would not make you a millionaire; I would make you rich in virtues. I would make you empathetic, thoughtful, great, and like a seer. I would make you a Devata (God-like). I have a burning desire to transform you as well as the whole world. I would make the entire world so much happy, healthy, and harmonious that it would appear like a Heaven. The people living in this transformed world would look like humans on the surface, but from inside, they would be divinely restructured. The divinity would spread from their every pore. This is my Plan for ushering in a New Era.

## Who was Acharyashri?

**Yug Rishi**, who revived and rejuvenated the great traditions founded by seers Viswamitra, Vasishtha, Vyasa, Yagyavalkya, Kanaad, Charaka, Narada, and other rishis.

**Yug Vyasa**, who wrote contemporary commentaries on 4 Vedas, 108 Upanishads, 6 Darshans, 20 Smritis, and 18 Puranas. He also authored 3200 books on all aspects of life.



**An ardent Freedom fighter**, who participated in the freedom movement of India along with Mahatma Gandhi and Madan Mohan Malaviya. He was famous as 'Shriram Matta' - one who was intoxicated with a great passion for freedom.

**A great Tapasvi (ascetic)**, who performed the arduous sadhana of Gayatri and accomplished the feat of performing 24 Mahapurashcharanas, each of 24 lakhs japa of Gayatri mantra, in 24 years.

**The sculptor of the new era**, who formulated 'Shatasutreeya Yug Nirman Yojana' (100-point plan for ushering in a new era) and laid a strong foundation for its implementation.

**A spiritual scientist**, who established Brahmavarchas Research Center, the first institution of its kind, to integrate science and spirituality and proved - "Science and spirituality do not contradict but complement each other." The 'One Religion' that he mentioned in his talk implies 'Scientific Spirituality.'

**A social reformer**, who focused his wholehearted efforts on women awakening, de-addiction, dowry-less weddings, removing discrimination based on caste, color, and creed, thus presenting a model of society based on high ideals.

**The leader of the 'Thought Revolution'**, who offered solutions to all individual, familial, social, and global problems.

**The Seer of the era**, who gave the slogan of "21st Century – Bright Future," thus, giving the message of the advent of the New Golden Era to humanity.



Everyone thinks of changing the world, but no one thinks of changing himself.

- Leo Tolstoy



## Four Pursuits of Human Life: Puruṣārtha Chatuṣṭaya

*D*harma, *Artha*, *Kāma*, and *Mokṣa* — together are defined in the Indian Culture (which in its original form is also honored as the “Divine Culture”) as *Puruṣārtha Chatuṣṭaya*. These represent the foremost objectives, endeavors, and achievements of a successful, holistically fulfilling, and truly worthy life. Of these, *Mokṣa* is the supreme goal of life; *Artha* and *Kāma* are the essential supports of worldly progress and fulfillment, and *Dharma* is the beacon light of guidance for ideal use of worldly resources and ascent of life towards the supreme goal.

The journey of human civilization has proceeded with different shades of culture. Broadly speaking, there are two extreme classes of cultures. One is materialistic - it encourages and thrives on consumption for sensory pleasures and worldly passions. The other extreme is nurtured by spirituality; it originates from noble values and idealism. The materialistic culture revolves around *Artha* and *Kāma*, whereas the spiritual culture aims at *Mokṣa* and is supported and guided by *Dharma*. It is essential to understand here that “*Mokṣa*” is not what the commonly used English translation (salvation) of this word is interpreted as ‘freedom’ or “resting in heavenly adobe” after death. In fact, “*Mokṣa*” implies the state of absolute peace, virtuous light, completeness, beatitude, and unalloyed bliss that is to be achieved in this very life. Similarly, “*Dharma*” is not a communal doctrine of orthodox norms in the name of God, as the word ‘religion’ is often interpreted.

In the true sense, “*Dharma*” (as clearly defined in the Sanskrit origin of this word) is - the adoption of those qualities, values, and principles in practice, which are universally essential and useful for peaceful co-existence and positive progress of all beings in consonance with Nature. Every component of Nature follows the eternal principles and disciplines (of sharing self-responsibility with sincerity, efficiency and consistency). This is what maintains the existence and self-regulated functioning of the entire creation (including the sustenance of life on the Earth) since uncountable Ages.

Like the cosmic as well as the atomic / micro-components, and other creatures in the ever-vibrant system of Nature, we, the humans, too owe to share our responsibilities. We need to wisely and positively transact our duties as an intelligent creature, as an evolved member of Nature’s family, as a social being, etc. in the best possible way to contribute to the healthy survival and happy evolution of all. This is what



The crowning fortune of a man is to be born to some pursuit which finds him employment and happiness, whether it be to make baskets, or broadswords, or canals, or statues, or songs. - **Ralph Waldo Emerson**



broadly amounts to the ‘religion’ assigned to us by the Almighty Creator. “*Dharma*” in *Puruṣārtha Chatusṭaya* is incorporated in this universal context. At the personal level of one’s life, it implies wisdom, sensitivity (compassion, benevolence), truthfulness, fidelity towards duties, etc., adoption of which leads to eminent progress and absolute good of the individual self, as well as others.

The main principles/disciplines of *Dharma*, as propounded by the forefathers of divine human culture are — self-determination, forgiveness, integrity (of character), scrupulosity and purity (of mind), self-restraint (over instinctive and sensory passions), prudence, pure knowledge, truthfulness, humility, and control over anger. Adoption of these orients one’s worldly life towards positive progressing and welfare by disciplining *Kāma* and *Artha*. *Kāma*, which otherwise is a synonym of sensual pleasures and lusty passions, becomes a source of creativity, real joy, enthusiasm, courage, and high vital energy, and nurtures the art of self-management. *Kāma* without *Dharma* is criticized in the Indian Culture as a disgraceful, beastly tendency. Undisciplined *kāma* fuels uncontrolled sensual

lust, irresistible passions for sensory pleasures, instinctive impulses; it rapidly weakens one’s mind as well as body, encourages perverted and violent tendencies, and leads to debauch devolution. This devolution declines and degrades a person’s character and life into that of a human-beast, a psychopath, a demon. The rising rates of heinous crimes of rapes, adultery, violence, thefts, etc., in the present times, are consequences of this unchecked, grotesque *kāma*. An increase in the cases of adultery, broken families, social anarchy, frauds, etc., is also a clear sign of the lack of *Dharma* in people’s life. Indeed, *kāma* sans the discipline of *Dharma* is worse than poison; it not only ruins one’s own life but also creates a hellish ambiance for others around.

It is the inspiring guidance and the bounds of *Dharma* that help refinement of *kāma* and positive and healthy channelization of its immense energy. *Dharma* does not make one devoid of the pleasures of worldly life. It only helps in achieving a natural balance, a prudent check, and discipline for one’s benefits and welfare in the materialist life; the light of *Dharma* guides a person to enjoy with awareness for self-control and viable progress in the positive direction. The principles of *Dharma*, if adopted righteously, lay the foundation of a heavenly paradise for everyone on the Earth itself.

Like *kāma*, *artha*, too, is an essential element of healthy human life. One can’t imagine the sustenance of life without it. Not only for materialistic growth, but it’s also essential even for the very survival of life these days. Even a hermit needs *artha* in some form to run his Ashram. But *artha* is worth its significance only if the generation and use of this powerful resource are guided and disciplined by *Dharma*. Wealth gained without the principles of *Dharma* means it is accumulated through unfair means. Money



Visualizing the future is never just a figment of imagination; instead, it's the pursuit of something real and tangible that will keep you focused at all times. - **Dr. Prem Jagyasi**





earned dishonestly further boosts greed and encourages more corrupt practices. A person caught in the clutches of avarice does not hesitate to exploit others or even hurting the interests of the society/nation. The widespread corruption and ever-new types of scandals taking place in our country are an indicator of the pathetic decline of personal and social values at large.

*Artha* without *Dharma* quietly creates a conducive environment for varieties of adversities in return for the monetary and other worldly gains. It hurts one's conscience and thus gradually weakens him from within and invites varieties of mental tensions and physical health complications; it nurtures negative instincts like addictions; the tendencies of selfish attachments, cruelty, etc., also get support from it. Sooner or later, one faces hazardous consequences of all this. Sinfully earned wealth and other worldly assets are found to carry-forward the adverse effects to later generations of the sinner; successive users of such property also suffer the negativity attached with the very origin and nature of such assets.

Prosperity expands and creates joy only if it is earned honestly by scrupulous practices. *Dharma* also teaches wise use of such fairly gained *artha* for altruist purposes of the welfare of the needy, constructive development, supporting noble activities, etc., rather than accumulating it only for the self and the near and dear ones.

Thus, under the guidance and support of *Dharma*, *kāma* and *artha* serve the purpose of the holistic development of the individuals as well as society. On materialistic fronts, they naturally contribute toward viable progress. More importantly, they also bestow immense satisfaction, positive enthusiasm, and peaceful joy in one's mind and heart (emotional core).

This inner development further strengthens one's dedication to follow *Dharma*, which gradually leads one's inner-self towards the divine feeling and pure light of *mokṣa*. One does not have to wait to die to attain heavenly peace and salvation; one's enlightened inner-self bestows the beatifying peace and blissfulness in this very life.

Attainment of *mokṣa* is the ultimate endeavor, supreme goal guided by the Indian Philosophy. It is the state of ultimate salvation in the worldly sense also, as it emancipates one from all thraldoms of all cravings, pulls and pressures, tensions, and worries. In spiritual parlance, it is the state of absolute purity of the inner self and peace of the mind. Nothing remains to be desired, looked for, or attained after that. In this state of ultimate content, absolute peace, and unalloyed blissfulness, one's inner self unifies with its supreme divine origin. Thereafter, one experiences divinity everywhere (in all worldly circumstances). The ambiance of his/her life becomes heavenly forever. The above discussion summarizes the precious spiritual knowledge of *Puruṣārtha Chatuṣṭaya*—the four pursuits of human life. Indeed, "*Puruṣārtha Chatuṣṭaya*" reflects the unique majesty, originality, sagacity, and completeness of the Indian Thought and Culture.



The pursuit of inner peace is more important than the search for happiness or success. – **Chris Shea**



## Psychological Basis of the Magnificent Effects of Mantra-Japa

Most spiritual saints and sages affirm *Mantra-Japa*<sup>1,2</sup> as a powerful mechanism for augmenting the willpower and self-awareness. It can thus be regarded as a procedure for mental strengthening, self-control, and psychological improvement along with the development of vigorous and virtuous personality.

The human mind at the conscious and subconscious levels is an ensemble of uncountable numbers of diverse thoughts and emotions. The nature of thoughts and emotions also varies enormously in terms of quality, stability, and impact. Thoughts and emotions generated by internal desire or mental resolution, or existing because of the predominant *sanskāras*<sup>3</sup> are more intense and cannot be waned out or refined easily. These, relatively more stable thoughts and emotions, if belonging to the evil (or substandard for human-dignity) category, cause maximum disturbances and obstructions during meditation. Sincere practice of *japa* of a *mantra* helps to control such perturbations because *japa*

is an activity that engages the major faculties of mind with natural harmony and ‘tunes’ them coherently with the rhythm and vibrations of the *mantra* which is being enunciated or chanted. This positive effect is most prominent in the case of the *Vedic Mantras*, because of their sublime phonetic/sonic patterns and corresponding syllabic configurations discovered/realized by the spiritual acumen of the great *rishis* (Indian sages/spiritual scientists of Vedic times) in a deep state of trance.

*Śraddhā*<sup>4</sup> in a *mantra* adds to the positive effects of its *japa*, as it provides instant moral support, deep emotional linkage, and hence inner courage and sublime energy to enable the *sādhaka* struggle and diminish the untoward instincts and disturbing intrinsic tendencies and thoughts. It is a principle of psychology that – if certain incident/experience, thought, lesson/story, song, or image, is often repeated before one’s mind, the latter begins to grasp and assimilate the same in the deeper layers of its memory. Corresponding thoughts, imaginations, or feelings then appear as ‘true’/facts to the devotee’s mind and may eventually become a part of his/her nature and belief.

### Unique Mental-Experiment:

*Mantra sādhanā* by *japa* is like a mental-experiment in which the retention and repeated enunciation of the *mantra* coupled with meditation and emotional faith generates specific psychological and spiritual activities at a steadily increasing pace. The process of *mantra-japa* naturally encompasses the following four aspects



Your assumptions are your windows on the world. Scrub them off every once in a while, or the light won't come in. - Isaac Asimov



(in terms of modern theories of Psychology) of training and improvement of the mind. Namely — (i) memorizing by repetition; (ii) retention and recalling; (iii) learning by experience and (iv) believing by conviction/convincing self-experience. In terms of spiritual philosophy, training of the mind and its emotional cores focuses upon – (i) self-observation, (ii) self-analysis, (iii) self-refinement, and (iv) self-development. These are the gradual steps during the enlightened march of the individual self towards the realization of God — The Omnipresent, Omnipotent, Omniscient, Eternal, Divine, Absolutely Blissful, Supreme-self.

Chanting of God's names through the heart has been uniformly regarded in almost all the religions/faiths and schools of philosophy across the globe as an important spiritual activity or a requirement for spiritual enlightenment. The scriptures on Indian Philosophy and spiritual sciences focus a great deal on the psychological significance of *mantra-japa* as well.

Short *mantras* like – *Om Hari Om*; or, *Hari Om Tat Sat*; or, *Soham*, etc., or God's names such as – “Sri Ram” or “Allāha,” etc., are like compact formulae or symbols in short-hand scripts to represent and remind the grandeur of divinity and the power of divine principles and disciplines. Repeated *japa* of such *mantras* or names would naturally (according to the psychological theories of stimulus-response), intensify divine faith and serene, moral characteristics in the *sādhaka's* mind. ‘How fast such effects would be realized?’ Answer to this would largely depend upon the desire (purpose), the willpower, and the intrinsic urge with which the *japa* is being performed. Impact of repeated shouting of same words in the same mood by several people together also causes similar

effects (of stimulus-response) in ‘mob-psychology’, when the repeated and collective shouting of certain motto or slogan during a grand procession, or as part of revolutionary movements, etc., is found to stimulate the public mind and motivate the masses towards the associated common purpose. The difference between such responses and the effects of *mantra-japa* should, however, be well understood here.

*Mantra-japa* is a spiritual exercise aimed at the main purpose of the spiritual elevation of the *sādhaka*. This also has sublime positive effects on the inner self, along with the psychological effects of recalling and retention. These results may appear meek initially and seem to occur at a slow pace but are definite, gradually augmenting, and everlasting if the *japa* is practiced sincerely and regularly.

#### **Sublime Impact on Human Body and Mind:**

Human-body is considered as a highly complex but complete example of a self-organizing (bio) physical system. Despite significant advancement of Biomedical Sciences and Engineering in the present era, a lot about the structure-function relationships and the interactions of



Imagination is more important than knowledge. - **Albert Einstein**





the macro and micro components of this wonderful living-machine and its ‘super-evolved’ brain still remains to be deciphered by the modern researchers.

The *rishis* were pioneers and absolute experts of the ancient sciences of *yoga*. They discovered that ‘*Yat Brahmāṇḍe Tat Piṇḍe*’ — the human body is a miniature model of the universe. The extrasensory energy nuclei and streams/channels of the subtle currents of *prāṇa*<sup>5</sup> and bio-electricity — namely, the *ṣaṭ cakras*, *panca kośas*, *tri-granthis*, the seventy-two thousands *nāḍis* and the fifty-four *uṇṭyikās*, etc.<sup>[1]</sup>, in the human body, as experienced

and identified by the *rishis*, are as vast and phenomenal as the expanse of the planets, stars, and the galaxies in the cosmic ‘sphere.’ As discussed in an earlier article of this magazine<sup>[2]</sup>, the science of *mantras* deals with the activation — by the sonic waves of *Śabda* and *Nāda*<sup>6</sup>, and specific use of these sublime/extrasensory centers and channels existing in the human body.

Strong possibility of profound psychological and subtler effects of *mantra-japa* can also be understood from the ancient science of *Tantra*. The *Tantra* Scriptures on the science of *mantra* describe the tongue as *Śakti* (the Goddess Parvati) and the heart as *Śiva* (God Shiva). These are also referred to as *Rayi* and *Prāṇa* or *Agni* and *Soma*. These two streams of unlimited divine force represent the eternal and mutually complementary subliminal currents of cosmic *prāṇa*, the confluence of which is supposed to be the source of existence and transcendental evolution of everything in this world.

Once, Gautam Buddha didn't hear from one of his disciples for a few days. He became worried and asked Anand (his disciple) about him. Anand said that the mentioned disciple is suffering from diarrhea. Buddha went to his house and saw that the sick disciple was lying unconscious in the corner of a room. Since no one nursed him, he was covered with feces. Buddha asked him if no one came for his service. The sick disciple said, “No sir, no one came to serve me. I have heard that they are all busy in their daily religious rituals. Hence, I didn't disturb them either.”

Gautam Buddha didn't say anything to anyone. He told Anand to bring some water. He said, “I will serve this man and nurse him.” Buddha cleaned the sick disciple's face and body with the clean water. Seeing the Lord nursing the disciple, other disciples also started helping him. In the evening, after the prayer, he called all his disciples and said, “Disciples! Meditation, Yoga, and rituals of worship are all essential, but when someone needs help, these become secondary. You cannot achieve anything in life without helping the needy. You should give more importance to serving and helping people than to daily meditation and rituals. Your purpose of joining the group and becoming a monk will be fulfilled only then.”



Great things never come from comfort zones. – **Anonymous**



The connection between the positively and negatively charged electrodes makes a complete circuit for the flow of electrical current. Similarly, though subliminally, the activation of *Śakti* by *japa* (through the tongue) and the realization of Shiva by the intrinsic force of *śraddhā* (awakened in the emotional core/heart, and inner-self) during *mantra-sāadhanā* generate a ‘current’ of the sublime force of *Śabda*. The latter, being empowered by the eternal Consciousness-Force, induces supernatural sonic effects and inculcates absolutely beatifying impressions in the subconscious, unconscious and superconscious domains of the mind.

### Significance of the Gayatri Mantra:

The Gayatri (*Gāyatrī*) Mantra — revered as the origin of divine powers, is signified in all the scriptures of Indian Philosophy and the science of spirituality and *yoga* as the supreme source of cleansing, awakening, divine-illumination and strengthening/empowerment of the mind and the inner self.

The *rishis* had recognized the Gayatri (*Gāyatrī*) Mantra as the mother (origin) of all Vedic *mantras*. Spiritual saints, eminent scholars and noted great personalities — including Swami Vivekanand, Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindra Nath Tagore, Sri Aurobindo, Arthur Koestler, etc. — of the Modern Age have also revered this great *mantra* as the eternal source of righteous intellect and inspirations for the foundation of world religion and culture of great human values. Cultural ascent and psychological evolution of the masses is essential for a glorious future of the globe and the dignity of mankind. This *mantra* is also majestic in terms of its unique sonic pattern, the sublime flow of *Śabda*, and astonishing physical, psychological, and spiritual impacts.

Linguistically, this *mantra* enfoldes the foundational principles of all the religions of humankind in a compact compilation of just twenty-four special syllables/words of Sanskrit. Its meaning implies a universal prayer for the illumination and righteous orientation of the intellect and awakening of the divinity indwelling in the inner self. That is why this *mantra* is also described as the shortest and the most ancient religious scripture, which can guide humankind towards lasting global peace, progress, and happiness.

Conducting experiments on *japa-sāadhanā* of the Gayatri Mantra by more and more people is, therefore, of vital importance in the present times. It would eventually lead to the collective awakening of human consciousness, rising of *prāṇa*, and the illumination of intellect towards the righteous path of divine evolution of the mind and the inner self.

### Notes:

1. *Mantra-Japa*: *Japa* (rhythmic chanting with mental and emotional engrossment) of a *mantra*<sup>2</sup>.
2. *Mantra*: A ‘verbal instrument’ (or ‘verbal formula’) of and for



There are two ways of spreading light: to be the candle or the mirror that reflects it. - **Edith Wharton**



the mind, which liberates the mind (of all ignorance, vices, thralldoms, and worries). In the state of trance, the spiritual acumen of the Vedic *rishis* had realized the *Vedic Mantras*, as specific configurations/compositions of sonic vibrations (sounds/phonemes) which were consequently uttered by them in *prākṛata* language (Vedic origin of Sanskrit) and later on scripted in some specific symbols and syllables of ancient Sanskrit. A devotional prayer suddenly emerged in the heart of a true saint in the state of trance is also considered as a *mantra*.

3. *Sanskāras*: Deep impressions and assimilations ‘inscribed’ in the unconscious mind (since earlier lives and the past phase of the current life). These are the sublime carriers of intrinsic tendencies, nature, talents, and potentials of a being in the continuous journey from one life to another.
4. *Śraddhā*: Intrinsic faith, reverence, and unflinching urge for divine ideals, values, and virtues; absolute reverence and devotion for God (and hence for the associated mantras).
5. *Prāṇa*: Vital spiritual energy.
6. *Śabda*: Eternal, cosmic element of sound (generated by the evolutionary impulse of *Brahmā*); absolute self-existent source of all expressed — including audible and inaudible sounds; and the spoken, written or mentally generated words, and unexpressed, sublime sounds/sonic vibrations in the etheric expanse. *Nāda*: The rhythmic flow of (eternal) musical sound – generated by the perpetual currents (vibration) of *Śabda*.

Swami Vivekananda was once visiting a king who told him that he didn’t believe in idol worship. “It’s illogical, primitive, and baseless,” the king said. “How can you love a stone? The stone is actually not a God.”

Vivekananda kept quiet for a while. When he was just about to depart, he pointed at a big portrait on the wall. “Whose picture is this?” Vivekananda asked the king.

“This is my great grandfather’s portrait,” he replied with pride. “His valor is known throughout the length and breadth of the country.” “Can you please take down this picture for a minute?”

The king was intrigued. Nevertheless, he did as asked.

“Now, spit on it,” Vivekananda instructed.

“Swamiji,” the king cried, “Had it been anyone else, I would have him thrown in jail for uttering such words. This is my great grandfather’s portrait. How can I even think of spitting? Visitors and workers bow before it.”

“Why?” Vivekananda countered calmly. “What’s the problem? It’s just a picture. How can you love a picture? This picture is not your great-grandfather.”

**The lesson:** Idol worship does not mean that you only worship the idol; it merely means you have assigned a form to the one you pray.



Japa does not mean a tongue exercise. It is only effective when we put our mind where the sound is so that the sound can vibrate unpleasantness out of mind. – Radhanath Swami





## Speech is a Reflection of Personality

Speech is an invaluable gift of God to man. Words are necessary to exchange thoughts in human society, and the speech imparts voice to these words. The whole fabric of interpersonal relationships in this world is rooted in speech. Just as misuse of wealth is harmful, abuse of speech is very detrimental as well, though very little attention is paid by many in this regard. As a result, many get embroiled in a lot of trouble and spend their entire lives repenting for their errors.

It is a well-known anecdote of the epic Mahabharata that Draupadi called Duryodhana, 'blind son of a blind father.' Her harsh words sowed a poisonous seed in his mind. This seed initiated events that eventually led to the great war of Mahabharata. So, saying anything thoughtlessly can even result in the creation of dangerous situations.

Kabirdas has also spoken thus – '*Boli ek annmol hai, jo koi bole jani; hiye taraju taul ke, tab mukh bahar aani*' (meaning - the words are priceless. One who knows how to use them well first carefully weighs them in the balance of his heart and only then speaks them out.) Speech is indeed very precious, and every spoken word has a lot of value. It is, therefore, imperative to weigh carefully before speaking whether what is being spoken has substance and truthfulness or not. Wise men say that any person who influences others does not express the foul language; he only talks about what sounds morally correct. However, he, who rarely follows any of what he says himself, his speech does not have any lasting effect, and he often gets ridiculed as untrustworthy.

Lord Krishna talks about three kinds of *Tapa* (penance, austerity) in the Gita – the *Tapa* of the physical body, speech, and mind. Why is the *Tapa* of speech important? What is its necessity in our lives? It is essential because speech is closely connected with the way we use our vital energy. There are two ways by which we spend a lot of our vital energy – first, in debating/discussing with others, and second, in eating.

Saint Tulsidas says – 'Pray to God leaving aside discussion-debates and slavery to taste.' We tend to get into heated discussions with others to show off our knowledge, to gain their respect, and to establish authority among others of our intellect, wisdom and superiority. We also run after taste and eat different types of savories. We like sweet, sour, and spicy food and do not think about what impact such foods have on our bodies. Such foods create an imbalance in the constituent elements of our bodies, which then make us ill. A lot of energy in our body gets spent on fighting such diseases.



The superior man is modest in his speech, but exceeds in his actions. – Confucius



Which is the organ that gets used the most in debating and experiencing taste? Our tongue. Scriptures describe many weapons used in ancient times like *Varunashtra*, *Pashupashtra*, and so on. These don't exist today anymore, but there is one weapon that is very much accessible even today – the tongue weapon! Speak harsh words and hurt anyone. The tongue can sting like a scorpion. This is why it needs to be restrained.

Lord Krishna, in the Gita (verse 15 of Chapter 17), says – ‘Speaking only in a way that doesn't offend, that is likable, beneficial and practical, reciting Vedic scriptures, and chanting God's name – constitute the *Tapa* of speech.’

The mind doesn't readily accept the practice of *Tapa*. Our memories and habits tend to disrupt this practice. So, the focused efforts are required never to speak harsh words, speaking the truth, speaking less but sweetly, and speaking beneficial words. Restraining the speech helps in the conservation of vital energy; the saved energy can be utilized for other arduous spiritual practices.

Every spoken word, in fact, is a mantra. Just as mantras are recited on auspicious occasions, words should

be spoken at the right times and for the good purpose. Words, which reflect falsehood, which humiliate or condemn others, or that can re-ignite a settled issue or provoke others should not be spoken. When a person expresses the truth and speaks sweet, pleasant, and meaningful speech, he accumulates more good karma than what he does by going on pilgrimages.

Speech has more power than swords or bows and arrows. This is why wise people do not waste this power of theirs, even in most adverse circumstances. The speech is also a reflection of personality. It is the most effective medium to express inner feelings. Our sweet and straightforward words impress others. When we speak sweetly, we gift presents to others without actually giving anything physically. So we must speak with discretion.

It is said that there are only three real jewels – water, grains, and sweet speech. We ignorantly call some pieces of stones as jewels. Just speaking sweetly at home, with our family members, and our neighbors can create a heavenly atmosphere.

The discipline of speech also helps us control our inner weaknesses like anger, ego, greed, attachment, etc. But, along with the sweetness of speech, our actions and dealings with others need to be honest too. The excess of anything is bad. Talking in excess invites trouble. Proper integration of noble speech and righteous actions is the definite road to success in life.

The wise ones fashioned speech with  
their thought, sifting it as grain is  
filtered through a sieve.  
– Lord Buddha



Mind your speech a little lest you should mar your fortunes. - William Shakespeare



## Why do We See Dreams?

All of us have an incredible connection with dreams. The world of dreams is so extraordinary that we wish to get lost in it. We love dreams and derive a lot of happiness in them. Only when the sleep is broken and the realization of the external world dawns, we begin to reminisce about what we saw in the dream. What is the meaning of what we saw, we wonder. Dreams are closely associated with us, and they come to tell us something, give us some indications, and show us something. Dreams have a unique science of their own.

Why do we see dreams? How does our mind weave them? What is their connection with our real world? Several such questions arise in our minds. Right from when we started sleeping, dreams have also shown their existence. Even then, they remain an unsolved puzzle. Everyone's dreams are different from that of others, and one cannot interfere in the dream of another. However, there are some visuals and incidents that everyone experiences in dreams – for example, seeing relatives, waterfalls, floods, animals and birds, snakes or running after train or bus, etc. We often see scenes that have some connection with our real lives, but sometimes we also see scenes that are unfamiliar or which have not been experienced earlier at all. Experts believe that whatever we see in dreams has some kind of existence somewhere in the world, whether we know about it or not.

The world of dreams is limitless. It has no beginning or end. Whether day or night, whenever we sleep, we may see dreams. There is only one segment of sleep where we do not

dream, and this is the period of deep sleep. Psychologists say there are four phases of sleep. The last phase is that of the REM – Rapid Eye Movement when most of the dreams are seen. When a person is dreaming with his eyes partly open, his pupils can be seen moving rapidly, indicating that the eyes are watching something. In the REM phase, the mind is active but does not consciously operate the body organs. This phase continues until the time the parts of the brain responsible for moving human body organs regain their awareness.

Sometimes the dreams are very clear and, at other times, not so much. Sometimes what is seen in dreams actually plays out in life, and at other times, what transpires, in reality, is exactly opposite to what is seen in dreams. Dreams are of different kinds; some are captivating, while others evoke fear. Experts say billions of dreams are seen on this earth every day, as on an average everyone watches 3 to 5 dreams every night. About six years of our lives are spent in dreams. What is surprising is that



All our dreams can come true, if we have the courage to pursue them. - **Walt Disney**



we remember only about 5 percent of what we saw, and even these dreams fade away from memory in time.

There always has been a lot of curiosity about dreams. According to a report, the first book on dreams was written in Egypt, thousands of years ago. In the Mesopotamian civilization in about 5000 BC, signs of the dreams and their meanings were carved on the balls of clay, which present evidence that dreams have been a topic of human interest even in ancient civilizations. The study of dreams is also a full discipline in the field of astrology.

From the 17<sup>th</sup> century, dreams have also been studied as a discipline of psychology. From Aristotle to Sigmund Freud, many thinkers have believed that dreams are a reflection of real life. Ayurveda also gives a lot of importance to them. Dreams can be created by suppressed desires or by a strong impact of some incident on our mind, or they can be premonitions of what may unfold in the future.

Some of the latest researches in Neuroscience have tried to find out why we see dreams and where do the events seen in the dreams originate from. It was found that most of

the dreams have some connection with our emotions. Psychology and Astrology both agree that dreams tell a lot about us. The only difference is that in psychology, dreams are used to assess the state of physical health and the mind, whereas Astrology interprets hidden signs in the dreams in its own way.

An interesting fact about dreams is that the higher the IQ of a person, the more dreams he sees. Some studies indicate that animals also see dreams in sleep just like humans. People who are born blind also dream, but they see no pictures and only feel the presence of sounds, smells, and touches. There are some dreams that everyone sees, like falling from heights, running after something, flying in the air, etc. There are some others in which we see our desires get fulfilled, which haven't been met in real life. Missing an exam, missing a train, reaching late to office, falling down from the height, failed attempt to fly, etc. are also dreams that many people see. Failure to reach in time sometimes interpreted as – a person has missed a good opportunity to achieve something.

Some dreams are seen as inauspicious, like the death of a close relative, watching someone die, seeing someone really ill, loss of limbs, etc. Sometimes dreams are so closely associated with our lives that whatever has to happen in the future, we begin to foresee its signs in our dreams. We should try to understand the hidden signs that dreams convey.

In order that such dreams do not turn true, several rituals have been suggested. For example, we may carry out benevolent and worthy deeds like helping the needy, donating for charity, etc. so that inauspicious occurrences are dispelled from our lives.



The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams. - Eleanor Roosevelt





## One can Become a Karmayogi only after Abandoning the Ego

Yogeshwar Shrikrishna advances his talk regarding the distinction between the wise and the ignorant through the following *ślokas*. He says –

*Prakṛteḥ kriyamāṇāni guṇaiḥ karmāṇi sarvaśaḥ ॥  
Ahaṁkāra-vimūḍhātmā kartāhamiti manyate H (27/3)*

Meaning: All actions are shaped by the Gunas (qualities) of Nature only. He whose mind is deluded by egoism thinks: “I am the doer.”

*Tattvavittu mahābāho guṇakarmavibhāgayoḥ ॥  
Guṇā guṇeṣu vartanta iti matvā na sajjate H (28/3)*

Meaning: But he who knows the truth, O mighty-armed Arjuna, about the divisions of the qualities and their functions, knowing that the Gunas as senses move amidst the Gunas as the sense-objects, is not attached.

Lord Shrikrishna, Sadguru of Arjuna, through these two *ślokas*, is distinguishing between the ignorant-egoist and the wise-unattached persons. He says that the ignorant person identifies himself with his thoughts and the body and assumes that ‘I am the doer.’ Attached to his actions, he is neither able to perform his activities properly nor utilize their outcomes fully. When Nature is doing everything, then how can we assume ‘We are the doers’? Without abandoning ego, a person cannot grow spiritually.

Nature is made up of the three Gunas (qualities) — Rajas, Tamas, and Sattwa. In reality, the Gunas of Nature perform all actions. The Gunas being discussed by the Lord here mean the senses. We deliver all our activities by the body and the senses that are given by Nature (possessing the three Gunas). Who is the knower of this body, senses, and the soul residing within us? Obviously, He is the Supreme Soul and not us. Forgetting the Supreme Soul and considering the self as the doer is ‘Ego.’ This confusion is called ignorance.

Shri Ramakrishna Paramhansa used to say, ‘Whatever we are observing, doing or thinking – is the work of that Adyashakti (Primal Power). Adyashakti or Mahamaya has covered our intellect. The ignorant man considers himself to be the doer, but the wise man knows that God is the only doer.’ Further, he (Paramhansa) would say, ‘There are two ‘I’s within a human being – raw I and genuine I. The raw I is the cause of bondage. When will salvation



The weak are dominated by their ego, the wise dominate their ego, and the intelligent are in a constant struggle against their ego. - **Hamza Yusuf**



come? When the ego vanishes. If the ego doesn't disappear, let it be there. 'I am a servant of God' – such a realization helps in overcoming the ego. When Samadhi occurs, the soul merges with the Supreme Soul, and the 'I' vanishes. Even when ego remains after attaining knowledge, it should be considered that this is the I of Vidya, or I of Bhakti, or that of service. This is genuine I.' One should know this.

Acharya Shankar says – 'God does everything. He is the doer; I am His instrument. Keeping in mind such thoughts, one should do his essential duties.' Such an emotion used to be evoked by Thakura Shri Paramhansadevji when he would sing this song –

*Āmi yantra tumi yantri, āmi ghara tumi gharāṇī ṭ  
Āmi ratha tumi rathi, jai mana cālāo te mani calīH*

Meaning – 'I am a machine; you are an engineer. I am a house; you are a house owner. I am a vehicle, and you are a driver. I move the way you drive me.' There is a vivid description of this song in Shrimad Bhagavad Gita edited by Swami Apoorvamandaji

(Ramakrishna Shivanada Ashram, Barasat, West Bengal – 1975). Param Pujya Gurudev used to say, 'Whether it is the field of sadhana or the social service, this ego is the most difficult barrier in progress.' Out of the three bondages (greed, attachment, and ego), he used to consider the last one as most poisonous. As cited on page 69 of 'Guruvar ki Dharohar' part-1, he said in his historic address on Shravani Parva (1988) – 'So long as the ego is alive, a man has no value. When this ego goes, he becomes invaluable. It is the ego due to which neither principles nor service nor ideals get imbibed in one's life.' Pujya Gurudev wrote one famous letter to parijans titled '*Yugshilpi ahamanyata ke vishpan se bachhen*' (meaning – the volunteers should keep away from the poison of ego).

In the twenty-eighth śloka, it is said, 'The wise men know that the Gunas (as senses) move amidst the Gunas (as the sense-objects).' The one who is aware of this fact and its outcome, he never gets trapped in the snares of this illusory world. It should be realized that the union of senses with the sense objects forms an action. The knowledgeable person knows that the soul is inactive, and the senses accomplish the activities. One who has not realized this fact, only he considers 'I am the doer' and 'would get its fruit.' This is the reason; many people are seen attached to action with the hope of getting its reward.

Lord is affirming the above statements in the following two ślokas:

*Prakṛterguṇasamūdāhṛt sajjante guṇakarmasu ṭ  
Tānkr̥tsnavido manadānkr̥tsnavinna vicālayet H (29/3)  
Mayi sarvāṇi karmāṇi sannyasyādhyātmacetasā ṭ  
Nirāśīrṇirmamo bhūtvā yudhyasva vigatjvaraḥ H (30//3)*



Shine your soul with the same egoless humility as the rainbow and no matter where you go in this world or the next, love will find you, attend you, and bless you. - **Aberjhani**



Meaning: Beguiled by the false identification of the bodily senses of Nature, they become entangled in fruitive activities. A man of perfect knowledge should not disturb those of imperfect knowledge. Surrendering all actions unto Me completely, with the mind centered in the self, free from hope and egoism, fight without grief.

This is a crucial point to be noted. Lord is explaining to Arjuna the essence of Karmayoga by stating that he should be ready to fight without any aspiration or fear. He is telling him, 'Forget that you are fighting.' The axle of Karmayoga is sacrifice. It is implied that one has to abandon ego before imbibing Karmayoga. Thus the knowledge that Lord is imparting in these four *ślokas* may be summarized as follows:

All the educated, cultured people should devote some time to guide common men selflessly and enthusiastically. However, no wise man should confuse the minds of ignorant people who are attached to fruitive actions; being unattached, he should perform all his prescribed activities, and in the process, inspire others.

The wise men should perform their actions without any expectation of reward or ego of accomplishment, free from anxiety, and with the spirit of surrender to God.

The message of the third *śloka* is the key to success, whether the effort is worldly or spiritual. The knowledgeable person should work with the spirit of '*Mayi sarvāṇi karmāṇi sannyasya*' - that is, surrender all the actions (and their fruits) to Me. Usually, common people work for their near and dear ones. But the Lord is advising that we should consider ourselves to be

the representative of God. Hence, instead of serving only our families or a specific community, we should serve the Lord (the whole world).

Param Pujya Gurudev has advocated this very greatness of divinity. He writes – 'The greatness is like a fire. One who comes in its contact becomes divinized. ....On such fortunate moments, awakened souls take courageous decisions and get credited as great men. ....These days Mahakal (the Time Spirit) has given a call to the awakened souls to cooperate with Him. In fact, this is nothing but a promising message to such spirits. .... If the awakened souls can listen to the call-invitation of Yugdevata, then they too can become near and dear ones of God like Arjuna and get the credit of accomplishing the monumental task of ushering in the new era.' (Pragya Abhiyan – the joint issue of October –November 1981)

The talk of the Gita mentioned above fits very well in the context of Yugadharma, as taught by Pujya Gurudev. The topic most dear to Pujya Gurudev was '*Anashakta Karmayoga*.' He emphasized through speech as well as writing,



I was transformed the day my ego shattered, and all the superficial, material things that mattered to me before, suddenly ceased to matter: - **Suzy Kassem**



‘You have to remain engaged on the front of Vichar Kranti incessantly without any aspiration or attachment. This movement is going to continue for your whole life. Such occasions don’t come again and again. If you want the credit, do it; otherwise, you will go through 84-lakh cycles of birth and death like other poor creatures.’ Whenever we study Karmayoga in the context of Yugadharma, we get messages like ‘*yudhyasva vigatjvarah.*’

In the thirtieth *śloka*, Lord is talking about three sources of loss of energy. He is giving a formula - *Nirāśīrnnirmamo bhūtvā* - that is, one should perform all his actions without any aspiration, attachment, and anxiety. The possibility of getting the fruit from work is called expectation/aspiration; getting remorseful due to the past happenings develops a sense of ownership (or attachment) to those events, and worry about the future reduces our efficiency. The anxiety in the present that has become a part of our habit destroys our powers. In this stress-filled age, when we are expected to deliver goods, it is but natural to be anxious. Lord is

advising us to remain calm and serene by balancing the past, present, and future, and work with the spirit of surrender.

All of us face continuous struggles in our lives. These are in the form of inner conflicts about our weaknesses, ups and downs in the career, health, and family life. Past regrets, present agonies, and future worries suck our energy, and we, knowingly or unknowingly, fall prey to failures and disappointments. If we can organize our hidden powers and utilize them in eradicating our vices, then we can not only solve our own problems but also help in wiping out the social evils. In fact, we should choose an ideal, develop firm faith in it, and start working towards accomplishing it. This is the only highway to success. Every great man had to follow this path. There is no shortcut.

Lord, in the next two *ślokas*, clarifies why some people prove to be successful, while others are unsuccessful. In the 31<sup>st</sup> *śloka*, He says –

*Ye me matamidaṁ nityamanutiṣṭhanti mānavāḥ*  
*Śraddhāvanto ’nasūyanto mucyante te ’pi karmabhiḥ* H (31/3)

Meaning: Those human beings who regularly practice this teaching of Mine with faith and without envy, become free from the bondage of actions.

And, in the 32<sup>nd</sup> *śloka*, He says –

*Ye tvetadabhyasūyanto nānutiṣṭhanti me matam* *ḍ*  
*Sarvajñānavimūḍāṁstānviddhi naṣṭāncetasah* H (32/3)

Meaning: But those who, out of envy, do not practice it, deluded in all knowledge and devoid of discrimination, know them to be doomed to destruction.





Lord is elucidating through these two *ślokas* that if the success in this battle of life is desired, then there is only one path, and that is, full dedication to a noble goal. Keeping the thoughts of this lofty ideal in mind, perform all the actions oriented towards achieving this goal. If we could understand this mystery, our lives would be filled with bliss. Param Pujya Gurudev, explaining this fact in the editorial of Akhand Jyoti (Hindi) of April 1982, wrote – ‘The scholars of Brahmaavidya (knowledge of the ultimate truth) should assimilate this eternal truth that the direct and indirect fruits of spiritual powers are much more than the material prosperity. It is like ready cash – give by one hand and receive by another. The refinement of personality is such a great benefit that its rewards can be encashed then and there. But to buy this wealth, one has to pay its price. Excellent thinking, refined character, and liberal grant of resources for social welfare form a Triveni Sangam. Immersing the self at this confluence results in one’s rejuvenation.’

One who knows this essence and imbibes in one’s life is not only successful on every front but also is liberated from the bondage of all actions. One who goes against this principle gets destroyed. These are the words of Lord in the Gita. Let’s now delve into thirty-third *śloka*.

*Sadrśaṁ ceṣṭate svasyāḥ prakṛterjñānavānapi ॥  
Prakṛtiṁ yānti bhūtāni nigrahaḥ kiṁ kariṣyati H(33/3)*

Meaning: Even a knowledgeable person acts per his own nature; all living beings are controlled by their own nature; what can restraint do?

Lord is saying that a knowledgeable person need not be an accomplished *siddha purusha*. He knows how to climb the ladder of success. But even that person behaves according to his nature (his inner impressions of lust/passions). All the creatures think according to their characteristic attributes and also act according to these strong waves of thoughts. Thus the origin of actions in all the creatures is their nature (passionate desires). The word *Prakṛtiṁ* (nature) has been used here in the context of one’s accumulated impressions over the past births. Every person is intrinsically compelled to act according to these impressions (nature). Therefore, Lord is saying that under such circumstances, what an external control can do.

It is essential to know that every person knows the path of *siddhi* (accomplishment) through *sadhana* (endeavor), at least, in principle. Then what is the reason he is unable to bring it into practice? Lord Krishna is depicting a situation of contradiction present in our lives. A medical professional knows that drinking wine is harmful to health. Even then, he himself gets habituated to it. Whatever



When you eliminate the ego, you will grow in the realization that all of us are equal in the eyes of God. - **J. P. Vaswani**



we know, we need not imbibe in practice. Why? Because we are tied to our inherent nature. Then, is it impossible to uplift (spiritually) ourselves? Then what for all the spiritual endeavors mentioned in all the religious texts are meant? The answer is – it is certainly possible to uplift oneself. But this cannot be achieved through sermons or external rituals; it can be achieved by awakening the faculty of discretion (what is right and what is wrong). It would be relevant to quote one line of Hindi poem – ‘*Eka bacī cinagārī cahe citā jale yā dīpa.*’ (Meaning – Only one spark is left; either lit the pyre or lit the lamp.) We have very little time and little amount of energy. We can squander it in sensual passions or utilize it in uplifting ourselves. Let’s pray Mother Gayatri to bestow on us the righteous intellect so that we utilize our energy in self-upliftment and the welfare of society.

**[To be continued]**

**Note:** This is the translation of Hindi version of ‘Yug Gita’ (Part 1) by Dr. Pranav Pandya, published by Sri Vedmata Gayatri Trust, Shantikunj, Haridwar (2003)

### Yudhisthira’s Answers to Yaksha’s Questions!

What is bigger than the Earth? The Yaksha asked.

"A mother," replied Yudhisthira.

What is taller than the sky?

"A father."

What is faster than the wind?

"The mind, of course." - Yudhisthira smiled.

What grows faster than hay?

"Worry"

What is the highest dharma in the world? Queried the Yaksha

"Compassion and conscience."

With who is friendship never-ending?

"With good people," responded Yudhisthira patiently.

What is the secret to never feeling unhappy?

"If one can control his or her mind, then that person will never feel sad."

What is the most significant kind of wealth?

"Education"

What is the highest kind of profit?

"Health"

What is the greatest kind of happiness?

"Contentment," said Yudhisthira, ever prompt with his replies.

What is man's worst enemy?

"Anger"

What disease will never have a cure?

"Greed is incurable."

The Yaksha smiled and asked the last question - "What is life's biggest irony?"

"It is the desire to live eternally. Every day, we encounter people dying, but we always think that death will never come to us."

- Sudha Murty

The Serpent's Revenge: Unusual Tales from the Mahabharata



We come nearest to the great when we are great in humility. - Rabindranath Tagore



## Innovative Ways of Problem-Solving through Practical Wisdom

It is said that necessity is the mother of invention. If there is a need and one has limited resources, then a flexible approach to fulfill the need is referred to as *Jugaad* (in Indian parlance). In any problem-solving, one requires talent and not any degree or high academic grades. When the skills of the hands and creativity of the mind come together, then one can express his genius in innovative ways. In this mindset, one creates such a marvel with limited resources, which not only fulfills the need but also amazes everyone.

Rajesh Kumar, a sixty-three years old resident of Shivay village of Meerut, has studied only up to the eighth standard. Still, his *Jugaads* have benefited the residents of the region. Even the students of nearby IIT, come to learn from him. Despite being a farmer by profession, Rajesh Kumar has created numerous such devices, which can make life more comfortable at a low cost. Rajesh Kumar, an expert in creating eco-friendly inventions, says that being a farmer, he understands the plight of peasants, so instead of plowing the fields with animals or pursuing manual weeding, he thought of developing the low-cost motorized weeding machine. He has designed it to work on solar energy so that petrol or diesel is not required and pollution is also kept in check.

He designed this machine by using the motor used in the wiper of cars and the start button and handle used in scooters. He has already demonstrated this solar-powered device, at Rashtrapati Bhavan and also in an event held at

the memorial of our former President, Dr. Abdul Kalam, at Rameshwaram. Apart from this, he has also modified the flour mill. He powered it by solar energy and operated it using a motor. This machine grinds about ten kilograms of flour within five hours (from ten in the morning to three in the afternoon).

About four years ago, he even prepared a biogas plant at home after getting fed up with standing in long queues for cooking gas. This plant, made of five drums, has been designed in such a way that upon filling the drums with dung, it continually produces gas for the next six months.

Another worth-mentioning name regarding *Jugaad* inventions is that of Jeetendra Bhargava, a resident of Anjad Nagar in the Badwani district of Madhya Pradesh. His innovation helped him get a low-cost motorcycle as well as fame. He installed an engine in his bicycle and transformed it into a motorbike.



If I had an hour to solve a problem, I'd spend 55 minutes thinking about the problem and 5 minutes thinking about solutions. - **Albert Einstein**



People were taken by amazement on seeing his bike running on the streets in Anjad. According to Jeetendra Bhargava, his old cycle needed repairs, which would have incurred an expenditure of seven to eight thousand rupees. Meanwhile, he saw peasant spraying pesticides in his field with a power pump. He inquired about the fuel consumption and capacity of the engine from the latter. Bhargava then connected this engine to his bicycle. He turned one of the brakes of the cycle to the accelerator and joined the other with the front and rear tyres to be used for the brake. This bicycle, with a 33 cc engine, is now an eco-friendly vehicle.

The total cost of manufacturing this vehicle is about 10-15 thousand rupees, while it does not cost almost anything on its maintenance. It gives a mileage of 100-125 kilometers in one liter of petrol. Its speed ranges from about 30 to 40 kilometers per hour.

The third example in the context of *Jugaads* comes from Bamori Kalan village in Baran district of Rajasthan, where a twenty-year-old lad, Yogesh Nagar, astonished everyone by operating a tractor through remote control. He has made this invention for the sake of his father, Rambabu Nagar. Owing to his ill health, Ram Babu was not able to work in his fields. This compelled Yogesh, who was pursuing B.Sc. at Kota to return to his village. He drove a tractor in the fields for a few days, but then he thought of doing something so that his father could work in his fields right from his home. Initially, he spent only two thousand rupees and devised a remote, which could make the tractor move back and forth. Then he took financial assistance from some friends of his father, and only by spending fifty thousand rupees, he

Troubleshooting is a form of advance problem solving, which few people excel in performing. Troubleshooting is a logical, systematic search for the source of a problem, where the symptoms of a problem in a complex system can have many possible causes. Problem solvers rely upon prior experience to determine the potential causes, and employ the process of elimination to detect the actual causes of a problem. The troubleshooter must always look for the simplest solution while considering the possibility that there is more than one fault. Every organization needs a person who is adept at troubleshooting, analyzing, and resolving a problem with an ingenious solution, or novel argument. A person who can see multiple sides to any dilemma, and structure a series of useful elucidations for consideration possesses an optimistic nature.

- Kilroy J. Oldster



A problem well put is half solved. - John Dewey





succeeded in driving the tractor using remotely controlled signals within a range of one and a half kilometer. Yogesh, who is currently studying B.Tech at Indore, now wants to build a similar remote-operated tank for our army to be used in inaccessible areas.

A motorcycle is known as 'Bambukat' in Punjabi. A few years ago, a Punjabi film based on it, which was titled 'Bambukat' became quite popular. In this movie, the lead actor has been shown to create a motorcycle, i.e., Bambukat from scrap. The real creator of this Bambukat is Ranjit Randhawa, a resident of Kharad, near Chandigarh. Ranjit, who has been modifying numerous types of vehicles for a long time, has revealed that it was a big challenge for him to collect parts for the bike. For this, he had to hunt various scrap shops from Chandigarh to Patiala, and then it was fabricated after working day and night tirelessly. In this bike, the oil tank was replaced by a milk can; the engine used was that of a Maruti 800 car, an exhaust fan was fitted; one tyre was that of the jeep while the other was that of a hand-drawn trolley. A *Tasla* (iron pan) was used to make the seat. Ranjit has this inherent creativity since childhood.

The fourth example of working out things through *Jugaad* is of Indrapal Singh Deol of Punjab. He was the main reason behind the success of his late wife, Sangeeta Deol, who was popularly known as "Honey Bee Queen

of Punjab." Despite suffering from polio, she gave a new dimension to alternative agriculture in Punjab by starting beekeeping. For this initiative, Indrapal used his *Jugaad* skills to fabricate a four-frame honey extractor in a drum, which was later upgraded to eight frames. Once the honey was procured from the comb, this machine had to be taken out. The honey was collected in a separate vessel. To get rid of this tedious work, Indrapal installed a pump inside it so that honey could be extracted easily. This invention, prepared at a low cost, made honey collection very easy for Sangeeta. Today, to complete the last wish of his wife, Indrapal Singh is teaching the process of beekeeping to the needy people.

In this way, the talented citizens of our country are meeting their needs through their practical wisdom. Such inventions made by them are indeed beneficial to the people.

### Band-Aid Solutions

A critic looking at these tightly focused, targeted interventions might dismiss them as Band-Aid solutions. But that phrase should not be considered a term of disparagement. The Band-Aid is an inexpensive, convenient, and remarkably versatile solution to an astonishing array of problems. In their history, Band-Aids have probably allowed millions of people to keep working or playing tennis or cooking or walking when they would otherwise have had to stop. The Band-Aid solution is actually the best kind of solution because it involves solving a problem with the minimum amount of effort and time and cost.

- Malcolm Gladwell



Think logically, and you have a chance to solve a problem. Reacting emotionally to it prolongs and worsens your dilemma. - **Stewart Staffordt**



## The Way of a Pilgrim

Once I was asked, "What do peace pilgrims do?" A peace pilgrim prays and works for peace within and without. A peace pilgrim accepts the way of love as the way of peace. To depart from the way of love is to depart from the way of a peace pilgrim. A peace pilgrim obeys God's laws and seeks God's guidance for one's life by being receptively silent. A peace pilgrim faces life squarely, solves its problems, and delves beneath its surface to discover its verities and realities. A peace pilgrim seeks not a multiplicity of material things, but a simplification of material well-being, with need level as the ultimate goal. A peace pilgrim purifies the bodily temple, the thoughts, the desires, and the motives. A peace pilgrim relinquishes as quickly as possible self-will, the feeling of separateness, all attachments, and all negative feelings.

Now traditionally, a pilgrim walks on faith without any visible means of support. I walk until given shelter. I fast until given food. It must be given, I never ask. But it is given! Everything is given to me, and I pass

it on. You must give if you want to receive. Let the center of your being be one of giving, giving, and giving. You can't give too much, and you will discover you cannot give without receiving. This kind of living is not reserved for the saints but is available for little people like you and me - if we reach out to give to everybody.

It is my mission as a pilgrim to act as a messenger expressing spiritual truths. It is a task which I accept joyfully, and I desire nothing in return, neither praise or glory, nor the glitter of silver and gold. I simply rejoice to be able to follow the whisperings of a Higher Will.

I have much to offer: I deal primarily with living God's laws. I extend to others the mystical approach to God, the kingdom of inner peace. It is free; there is no charge.

There was a time - when I attained inner peace — when I died, utterly died to myself. I have since renounced my previous identity. I can see no reason to dwell upon my past; it is dead and should not be resurrected. Don't inquire of me - ask about my message. It's not important to remember the messenger; just remember the message.

Who am I? It matters not that you know who I am; it is of little importance. This clay garment is one of a penniless pilgrim journeying in the name of peace. It is what you cannot see that is so very important. I am one who is propelled by the power of faith; I bathe in the light of eternal wisdom; I am sustained by the unending energy of the universe; this is who I really am!



We're all pilgrims on the same journey - but some pilgrims have better road maps. - **Nelson DeMille**



I always have a feeling of awe and wonder at what God can do — using me as an instrument. I believe that anyone who is fully surrendered to God's Will can be used gloriously — and will really know some things — and will probably be called self-righteous. You're called self-righteous if you are self-centered enough to think you know everything — but you may also be called self-righteous by the immature if you are God-centered enough to really know some things.

My desire is to strive toward perfection, to be as much in harmony with God's Will as possible, to live up to the highest light I have. I'm still not perfect, of course, but I grow daily. If I were perfect, I would know everything and be able to do everything; I would be like God. However, I am able to do everything I am *called* to do, and I do know what I need to know to do my part in the Divine Plan. And I do experience the happiness of living in harmony with God's Will for me.

Any praise I receive does not change me, for I pass it right along to God. I walk because God gives me the strength to walk; I live because God gives me the supply to live; I speak because God gives me the words to speak. All I did was to surrender my will to God's will. My entire life has prepared me for this undertaking. This is my calling. This is my vocation. This is what I must be doing. I could not be happy doing anything else.

When I began my pilgrimage, I left the Los Angeles area without a cent, having faith that God would provide me with everything I needed. Although I have never asked for anything, God has provided me with everything along the way. Without ever asking for anything I've been supplied.

I have faith that God will care for me, and God does provide my needs. I don't in any way feel insecure because I don't know where I will sleep at night, where or when I will eat

next. When you have spiritual security, you have no more feeling of need for material security. I don't know anybody who feels more secure than I do — and, of course, people think I am the poorest of the poor. I know better, I am the richest of the rich. I have health, happiness, inner peace — things you couldn't buy if you were a billionaire.

I do my work easily and joyously. I feel beauty all around me, and I see beauty in everyone I meet, for I see God in everything. I recognize my part in the Life Pattern and I find harmony through gladly and joyously living it. I recognize my oneness with all mankind and my oneness with God. My happiness overflows in loving and giving toward everyone and everything.

For light I go directly to the Source of light, not to any of the reflections. Also I make it possible for more light to come to me by living up to the highest light I have. You cannot mistake light coming from the Source, for it comes with complete understanding so that you can explain it and discuss it. I recommend that way to all who can take it. And great blessings lie in store for those who are wise enough to quickly put into practice the highest light that comes to them.

That which is received from without can be compared with knowledge. It



I believe each of us is a pilgrim in our own way; we are all lost souls, trying to find our way home. - **Seth Adam Smith**



leads to believing, which is seldom strong enough to motivate to action. That which is confirmed from within after it is contacted from without, or that which is directly perceived from within (which is my way) can be compared with wisdom. It leads to a knowing, and action goes right along with it.

In my dealings with people, I don't chastise, nor do I issue edicts or lay down a blueprint. My appointed work is to awaken the divine nature that is within. This is my calling, to open doors of truth and make people think, to arouse others from their apathetic and lethargic state, and get them to seek out for themselves the inner peace which dwells within. This is the extent of my undertaking, I can do no more. The rest I leave to a higher power.

Faith is a belief in things that your senses have not experienced and your mind does not understand, but you have touched them in other ways and have accepted them. It is easy for one to speak of faith; it is another thing to live it. To me, *faith* represents that people can, through their own free will, reach out and contact God, and *grace* represents that God is always reaching toward people. To me it is very important that I remain in constant contact with God, or divine purpose.

People have had to make up for their spiritual impoverishment by accumulating material things. When spiritual blessings come, material things seem unimportant. But spiritual blessings do not come until we desire them and relinquish desire for material things. As long as we desire material things this is all we receive, and we remain spiritually impoverished.

Those who have overcome self-will and become instruments to do God's work can accomplish tasks which are seemingly impossible, but they experience no feeling of self-achievement. I now know myself to be a part of the infinite cosmos, not separate from other souls or God. My illusory self is dead; the real-self controls the garment of clay and uses it for God's work.

When I started out, my hair had started to turn to silver. My friends thought I was crazy. There was not one word of encouragement from them. They thought I would surely kill myself, walking all over. But that didn't bother me. I just went ahead and did what I had to do. They didn't know that with inner peace I felt plugged into the source of universal energy, which never runs out. There was much pressure to compromise my beliefs, but I would not be dissuaded. Lovingly, I informed my well-meaning friends of the existence of two widely divergent paths in life and of the free will within all to make their choice.

There is a well-worn road which is pleasing to the senses and gratifies worldly desires, but leads to nowhere. And there is the less traveled path, which requires purifications and relinquishments, but results in untold spiritual blessings.

[To be continued]

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A true pilgrimage requires letting go of the very things most people try to hold onto. In seeking after what the soul desires, we become pilgrims with no home but the path the soul would have us follow. - Michael Meade





## Gayatri on the Banks of Yamuna – 2

### Rishi Durvasa's *Tapasthali*

Shriram had completed designing the map of Gayatri Tapobhumi. He had chosen the name “Gayatri Tapobhumi” for the *sadhana*-center.

He kept the map and lay down on his bed. At that time, it was only a decision about the place and its name, but Shriram's mind was so immersed in the thoughts of Gayatri Tapobhumi that he even started watching its activities like a film — ‘Many people were doing *japa-tapa*, many were conducting *yagya* in the *yagyashala*. Discourses and interactive discussions (*satsang* sessions) were going on in the lecture hall on important topics of spirituality, Gayatri-Sadhana, and ancient Indian Culture. In some other corner of this center, people were also busy in self-study (*swadhyaya*) of the ancient Indian texts and enlightening thoughts of great personalities on these topics.’

Everything appeared so real! Shriram could not make out whether it was a flashback of some events of the old age or was a glimpse of the future he had envisaged. Whatever it may be, at that moment, he was simply enjoying the play on his mental screen. Suddenly he saw that a grand *yagya* was going on in a vast ground in which thousands of people were participating. More than these people in number, were those who were standing around the fire-altars of this *yagya* in subtle bodies (not perceivable through physical senses). These appeared like the *rishis*; they had long hair and beard; only the lower parts of their bodies were wrapped up with leaf-like material; the divine

glow on their faces had brightened further in the light of the flames rising from *yagya*-fire. They seemed delighted by listening to the chants of Vedic Mantras, seeing the *yagya*-fire, and smelling the soothing fragrance of herbal preparations offered in it.

Shriram was lying on the bed, and his eyes were open. His consciousness was fully engrossed in this majestic experience – which was neither a dream nor a physical reality. Suddenly he saw that one of those *rishis* is looking at him. Shriram recognized him; he was his angelic mentor, spiritual guide, his Gurudev! He came towards Shriram through the sky and stood before him. Shriram experienced it that indeed his Gurudev has again appeared before him in a subtle body. Shriram got up and bowed his head on the holy feet of his Gurudev.

The angelic being blessed him and said – “The grand *yagya* you watched just now is a glimpse of what you have to do as *purnahuti* (completion) of the Gayatri *Mahapurashcharanas* you



People, who are crazy enough to think they can change the world,  
are the ones who do. – Rob Siltanen



have done. This event will also mark the preparation for what you have to do later on. Don't worry if the space you have got at present is small or if your resources are limited. There will be no shortage of support. The *rishi*-souls you saw standing around the *yagya*-fire will help you make all the arrangements”.

Shriram was obediently listening to his Gurudev's instructions. His angelic master further said – “The place you have chosen today is destined for the establishment of Gayatri Tapobhumi. Thousands of years ago, *rishi* Durvasa had done intense *tapa-sadhana* at that place”. A doubt arose in Shriram's mind that a temple of *rishi* Durvasa is located on the other side of river Yamuna and people call that as his *tapa-sthali* in ancient times. But Gurudev is telling that the *bagichi* he saw today was the *tapa-sthali* of *rishi* Durvasa!

His Gurudev sensed this doubt of his mind and clarified – “The place you have chosen has been the *tapa-sthali* of *rishi* Durvasa. In his times, river Yamuna used to flow in the front of that place. Or, you may say his *tapa-sthali* was on the left side of the river”.

The suspicion of Shriram's mind had vanished. But now there was a

question as to if Gurudev wanted to choose some *rishi*'s *tapa-sthali*, then he should have chosen that of *rishi* Vashishtha or Vishwamitra. Why did he inspire me to select the *tapa-sthali* of *rishi* Durvasa, who is known more for his anger? He humbly expressed this query before his Gurudev.

Gurudev explained: “At the right time, you would come to know the facts and reasons behind the common convictions regarding *rishi* Durvasa. You yourself will have to clarify many such doubts and queries of people in the years to come. *Rishi* Durvasa's *tapa-sthali* is chosen in the Brij region because, on this land, no other *rishi* carried out ardent *tapa* of such grandeur as he did. He attained immense radiance through this *ugra* (extremely ardent) *Gayatri Sadhana*. People used to feel intense heat and radiation in his presence and were not able to tolerate it and often used to take it as the effect of his anger on them”.

“This is for the first phase of the tasks the Almighty has assigned you. You will also have to work in the *tapa-sthalies* of *rishis* Vashishtha and Vishwamitra at advanced stages,” – Gurudev said. This way, Shriram received transcendental instructions on the formation of Gayatri Tapobhumi and the next phase of spiritual endeavors. Till he was awake, Shriram experienced the presence of his divine guiding force and the grand *yagya* going on in front of him. This continued till his mind went into *yoganidra*.

### **Dedication of Punyas**

Shriram's epochal *sadhana* of twenty-four *Mahapurashcharanas* of Gayatri Mantra had commenced in the year 1926. With the completion of one *Mahapurashcharana* every year, this was to be completed



You can do anything as long as you have the passion, the drive,  
the focus, and the support. - **Sabrina Bryanv**



by the year 1949-50. However, it got delayed due to Shriram's dedicated participation in the peaceful freedom movement of India, which his divine guiding force defined as part of his *sadhana*.

Shriram had been an active volunteer for this unprecedented national movement. Though he also had to go to jail and face tortures of the British rulers, he did not deviate from this patriotic *sadhana*. Despite all these, he maintained the arduous restriction of diet and other disciplines of *tapa*. However, the freedom movement and other social activities disturbed the strict continuity of his daily *japa* for nearly three years. So he had prolonged the duration of his *Mahapurashcharana Sadhana* by three years. The transcendental experience of that night after drafting the plans of Tapobhumi had reminded him of the tasks ahead on this spiritual *sadhana* front as well.

After his *japa-sadhana* next morning, Shriram continued with his regular activity of writing one article for Akhand Jyoti and responding/writing pending letters to the *parijans*. In each letter, as well as in Akhand Jyoti, he mentioned about the construction of Gayatri Tapobhumi. He used to regard every reader of Akhand Jyoti and everyone associated with it and with Gayatri *sadhana*, selfless social service, and related activities as his family member. Therefore, he used to address these people as *parijans*. Writing articles for Akhand Jyoti or correspondence with anyone in this regard was, for him, like 'meeting a *parijan*.' After completing the writing work, he used to meet the visitors. These included *parijans*, other acquaintances, associates of freedom-movement, and needy people who used to come to him for sympathetic support and guidance. Shriram discussed about the Gayatri Tapobhumi plans with all *parijans* and acquaintances.

The series of *Mahapurashcharana Sadhana* was due to complete in two years – by the auspicious day of *Vasant Panchami* in Samvat 2010 (i.e., Jan/Feb 1953 AD). He planned to organize the grand *yagya* of its *puṇahuti* on *Gayatri Jayanti* the same year.

Shriram called a meeting of volunteers (*parijans* and those associated with the implementation of the *Tapobhumi* project). First, he mentioned about the *puṇahuti yagya* that was to mark the completion of his *sadhana* and also the launch of a major movement of a cultural renaissance. One person got up and said – “You are going to call so many people to participate in this *Mahapurnahuti Yagya*! But then your great *puṇya* of the intense arduous *sadhana* of twenty-seven years is going to get distributed among all these people. What will you gain then?”

Shriram told him that as per our ancient tradition (the tradition of our great *rishis*, the tradition of our divine Culture) all *sadhanas*, all devotional worships are offered to the Almighty. Real spiritual *sadhana* of *japa-tapa* is that which is aimed at the welfare of all. Moreover, the sole aim of my *sadhana* was the revival of spiritual, cultural values and ethical principles



Passion is energy. Feel the power that comes from focusing on what excites you. - Oprah Winfrey



for the upliftment of humanity. Anyone who gets its *punya* will also work for this very goal, which is all the more better for everybody. (He had thus donated the precious, beatified attainments for the masses). He then explained that the purpose of the *Sahasranshu Brahm Yagya* that was to be completed before the *Mahapurnahuti Yagya* was to generate this kind of collective spiritual effect. Thousands of *sadhaks* from all walks of society were to contribute to *Sahasranshu Brahm Yagya* by way of collectively doing a total of 1250 million *japa* of Gayatri Mantra, 125 thousand days of fasting, 12.5 million *ahutis* in Gayatri *Yagyas* (*havans*), in one year.

While talking about the Gayatri Tapobhumi project in the meeting, Shriram made it clear that he will purchase the land using his own resources. However, he said the contribution from many people would be required for the construction work. There will be transparent accounting of every single penny donated for this purpose. Everyone will have a right to crosscheck and verify the accounts.

Taiji entered the meeting room while this discussion was going on. My donation should be accepted first

of all. Everyone was stunned by her sudden appearance and this announcement. She further announced – “I will donate eleven hundred rupees for this noble cause,” and as a mark of signature to her pledge, she took out eleven silver coins in her hands and placed them on the *chauki* (small table) kept in front of Shriram.

Others sitting over there also tried to fetch something from their pockets, but Shriram stopped everyone. He said, please don’t do this way. Let the receipt books, billing books, ledgers for accounting get ready. Then we will start the process of collecting donations. Most of them obeyed him. But by then, Mr. Kedarnath Singh from Patna had already taken out some notes of rupees and ‘covered’ them in a folded paper. He kept this ‘packet’ on the *chauki* and said, please don’t say anything and don’t open it. It is a matter between Gayatri Mata and me. Some others also tried to follow him, but Shriram strictly refused to accept any more of such instant contributions.

### ***Akhand Deepak and Agni***

Shriram’s family was worried about the incessant flame (divine light) of the *Akhand Deepak*. The family did not mean only his mother (Taiji), wife (Mataji), and children; it included all the *sadhakas* present there and the workers at Akhand Jyoti Press/Office. Children were too young to give any opinion. Among the others, some felt that the *Akhand Deepak* should be kept in Gayatri Tapobhumi, where all *sadhakas* and other visitors could have its *darshan*; it is divine light. It will be like a deity for future generations. It should be kept in the temple where all worship and *japa-sadhana* will take place. Some others present there also supported this view.

Shriram listened to everybody and thought for some



If you are working on something that you really care about, you don't have to be pushed. The vision pulls you. – **Steve Jobs**





time. Then he said – “This *Deepak* has witnessed all my *upasana-sadhana*. The *Mahapurashcharana Sadhana* is also being done before its divine light. Still, more than two years are there for the completion of this *sadhana*. That way, the construction of Tapobhumi may also take this much time. So we may be able to enshrine it there. But the major problem is that Mataji has taken the responsibility of looking after this *Akhand Deepak*. So if we take this *Deepak* to Gayatri Tapobhumi, Mataji will also have to live there. Is that possible?”

Now everyone was puzzled. It was not a big issue, but after all, some decision was to be taken. One thoughtful volunteer expressed the concern that – “All your *sadhanas* should continue in front of this *Deepak*. But it will not be possible for you and Mataji to shift to Tapobhumi, as this will disturb the entire system here. The publication of *Akhand Jyoti* will also be disrupted. Gayatri Tapobhumi, as you had mentioned, is going to be mainly a center for the training and practice of *tapa-sadhana*, *swadhyaya*, and *swavalamban*. So the *Akhand Deepak* should remain where it is enshrined at present. It should not be moved. The *sadhakas* can come here and have *darshan* of the *Akhand Deepak*”. Everyone else was also convinced by this suggestion that Shriram’s *sadhana-sthali* and hence the *Akhand Deepak* should remain here only.

In further discussions, it was decided that the specially designed notebooks with a total of 24 lakhs (2.4 million) Gayatri Mantras written on these by *sadhakas* should be placed in Tapobhumi. It was also decided that the holy soil and water of twenty-four hundred *tirthas* shall be collected and enshrined in a *Kalash* there.

Before the conclusion of the meeting, Shriram, inspired by some sudden intuition, declared that – “Sacred fire will be brought from the sublime cores of the Himalaya, where my divine guiding force meets the enlightened disciples. This is the sacred fire of *yagya* done by those angelic *sadhakas*. This sacred fire will kindle the *yagya*-fire in Tapobhumi, and this *yagya*-fire will be maintained as *akhand agni* (i.e., sacred fire which will never extinguish)”.

All *sadhakas* present there felt blessed to know that they will have an opportunity to do *yagya* in this beatifying *akhand agni*.

[To be continued]

With our faith in our community of two or more, we can go anywhere. When the three roots of faith, practice, and community support have fed us deeply, then we will be solid both alone and in our relationships. We will not just survive; we will flourish. Often in our daily lives, we are just focused on survival. But fidelity is not a question of survival. It is one of vitality.

- Thich Nhat Hanh



The pessimist sees difficulty in every opportunity. The optimist sees opportunity in every difficulty. – **Winston Churchill**



## Climbing the Ladder of SUCCESS

Every step on the path of progress is significant. It could be a small step or a big one; it nevertheless takes us closer to our goal and hence valuable. If we have to reach an upper floor, we climb several stairs, one at a time. Similarly, to reach our goal, we have to take one step at a time that brings us to a place that is nearer to our desired goal. However, we should be careful during climbing stairs because there is always a risk of tripping over or falling when we climb fast. Similarly, we need to be careful when we move towards our goals.

Every step that takes us towards our goal is essential. There is a story in Panchatantra that elucidates this fact. The story goes like this –

There lived two birds in a jungle. At one end of the forest, there was a tree that gave tasty fruits only once a year. When the season for fruits arrived, all birds planned to travel to that part of the jungle. In this context, the first bird told the second one – ‘That tree is quite far from here. I will take my own time and reach there since the fruit-bearing season lasts for two months.’ The second bird was over-excited and replied – ‘Friend! I am very eager to

go there. Even the thought of those tasty fruits is making me salivate. I want to fly there in a single stretch and eat those sweet fruits.’

The next day, both birds flew out of their nests towards the faraway tree. After covering some distance, the first bird felt tired and rested on the branch of a tree. The second bird smiled at the first one and continued to fly with renewed speed. It, too, was experiencing fatigue but was, however, in a hurry to eat the fruits. So, it chose not to stop and kept going till it could see the fruit-laden tree. It could even smell the aroma of ripe fruits, but at that instant, its wings gave away due to exhaustion. It fell from the skies, and the wings got broken. It could never reach the tree to enjoy the fruits.

On the other hand, the first bird completed the journey in phases and comfortably reached the tree. It could eat the fruits to its heart-content. The moral of this fable is that we can reach our goal in a series of steps. Rest is as important as effort and exertion. Taking a break helps us rejuvenate and move forward with extra vigor. Excess zeal and greed can be harmful and risky too. While it is essential to be enthusiastic about reaching the goal, we should restrain from overdoing it.

Everyone has to work hard to reach one’s goal. All these efforts and exertions are useful only when desired results are achieved; else, it is termed as waste. That is definitely not the case. Even when the desired goal is not reached, we should remember that those efforts and exertions helped us move ahead in life. We gained new experiences and learnings that will prove useful in the subsequent course of life.



Try not to become a man of success, but rather try to become a man of value.

– Albert Einstein



Any worthwhile task can be accomplished only by relentless effort, hard work, and planning. Take, for example, the case of building a house. First, the blueprint of the architecture is developed. It is then followed by collecting the materials for construction and then laying the foundation. Gradually, the house gets built over time, according to the blueprint. As a beautiful home is built brick by brick, so is the case with attaining the desired goal. Climbing one step at a time, you can reach the first floor, and continuing the climb will take you to higher levels. It is the small tasks that we accomplish every day that will pave the way for reaching the loftiest of goals.

People who dream of fulfilling their lofty ambitions while ignoring the small tasks of everyday life cannot achieve success because achieving these small successes is the basis for the final one. Those who do not pay attention to little things in life cannot meet big ones either.

Mahatma Buddha says – ‘Whatever work you have at hand presently, do it to the best of your ability with full enthusiasm. Do not ignore or look down upon any task.’

The lives of all great people assert this truth that they could become great only by discharging the smallest of their duties with care and wisdom. We should always bear in mind that each little thing is necessary. Just like 12 months make a year, even if a single month is left out, the year cannot be completed. Similarly, each of our steps symbolizes the attainment of our goal. So, do not make the mistake of ridiculing the small steps. In fact, we should always set micro-goals that require small efforts, and achieving these small goals will eventually lead you to final success.

If 5 out of 10 small efforts end up in failure, it might disappoint us. But the success in five efforts boosts our enthusiasm and confidence too. Hurrying into any activity

is always a damaging proposition because when we are in a rush to do things, we tend to make mistakes that may not be rectifiable. That is why we should always be careful and alert while choosing and executing each of our activities. Doing something without adequate thinking is a sure way for inviting disasters that can throw us off the path leading to our goals.

A person whose natural tendency is to listen, think, and understand before jumping into any activity, has a higher chance of scaling the heights of success. When an infant begins to learn walking, he first crawls and then gradually stands up and tries to walk, holding something for support. He might wobble, fall in between, but he begins to walk. In an effort to get up and walk, the child falls many times and hurts himself. He cries but does not give up his efforts. He continues trying and one day succeeds in his goal of walking. Then he not only walks but runs soon after.

In essence, if we want to progress and achieve success in life, we should remember that small steps are significant in reaching the pinnacle. We undoubtedly feel good about reaching the pinnacle but should never forget that it is those small steps that enabled us to reach the top. Only when this is borne in mind can one scale the heights of success.



Success is a lousy teacher. It seduces smart people into thinking they can't lose. – **Bill Gates**



## Family is the Prime Training School of Spirituality

(Translation of some excerpts of the discourse given by Pandit Shriram Sharma Acharya)

Let us begin with a collective chant of the Gayatri Mantra:

*“Om Bhūr Bhuvah Swah,  
Tatsaviturvarenyam Bhargo Devasya  
Dhīmahi, Dhiyo Yonah Prachodayāt ||”*

### Sisters and Brothers,

Nature has gifted us, human beings, with a tendency to live in a family. Living in ‘Family’ means living with others, cooperating, and sharing the joys, sorrows, and responsibilities with them.

In general, people form their own families by getting married; they live with their spouses and children in their respective families. Often near relatives (especially the parents of the husband or wife) also live in one’s family. Those who are not married also have a family consisting of their parents, siblings, etc. Usually, the bond of love and affection with family members, the natural help and support offered by them are such that family becomes one’s most ‘sought-after’ comfort zone.

But, what about those who don’t have any near-relative or blood-relation living with them? Well, they also don’t live in complete isolation all the time. They would also have some people around, like friends, colleagues, and others, with whom they interact. Healthy, amicable, cooperating relationship/interaction with people is also soothing, like a family-relation. One can have such a family anywhere sans any blood-relative around. In fact, it is the soothing feelings and relations of friendship, harmony, togetherness, caring and sharing (whenever in need), mutual respect, help, tolerance, etc., which account for the paradise of a ‘family.’ Wider the domain of such family-relationships, broader would be the horizons of content, peace, and blissfulness in one’s life.

### Spiritual Context of Family Life

Only ‘living together’ does not define a family-life. There are several other aspects of family-life that pertain to spirituality. For example, it matters how you spend your income. You may wonder what relation it has with spirituality! Well, spirituality has a role to play in our emotions, thoughts, attitudes, and deeds in every respect of life. How much you earn is not a concern here, but how you earn and, equally importantly, how you spend it, that matters.

Spiritual disciplines require that you earn by honest means and spend it prudently with a sense of responsibility. It is wrong if you keep a major chunk of your earnings for



You don't choose your family. They are God's gift to you, as you are to them. - Desmond Tutu





yourself and give only a bare minimum to your wife to run the house. Don't you bother to take care of her needs, her freedom? Then what kind of life-partner you are? Don't you care for the health issues of your elderly parent(s)? Don't you owe anything to them; are they as capable as they were when they brought you up? And what about the children! If not you, then, who will take care of their adept upbringing, education, and overall development?

Spiritual qualities like honesty, generosity, farsightedness, etc. can be practically tested even on this single criterion, viz., what do you do with your earnings?

You may be very intelligent and very talented; you may have earned a lot of respect and resources. But you are a failure on the spiritual front if you misuse what you have.

#### **Do Not Misuse Your Resources**

You are worse than a criminal if your potentials, your abilities, your resources, your earnings are misused, or are encouraging/spreading evils or unhealthy tendencies in any form. For example, you might be an excellent singer, musician, or any other artist. But if you have sold your creative talents for selfish means or spreading negativity in the society through it, then shame on you. You should be punished for this hidden but severe crime of generating erotic, violent, or other negative feelings, and misguiding the present and future generations, and spoiling their future.

You might be a famous lawyer; you might be earning huge sums by winning judicial cases of your clients. But if you tell lies, you misguide the witnesses, train them to tell lies; if you use your sharp intellect in arguments supporting your clients even if he is the culprit, then you

are a bigger culprit than him; you are a sinner. Such clever people are like wolfs in the human body.

Tell me, will you use the same tactics, same deceptive approach against your own family members? How will you feel if your near and dear ones are being misguided or cheated by someone? So you see, morality is so naturally followed when it comes to the people in our family! Far more than morality, even spirituality is nurtured naturally in family life. In fact, several qualities and principles of spirituality are the essential basis of fulfilling family life.

#### **Spiritual Principles Inherent in Family Life:**

Affectionate care of the family members and sharing the resources with them are pivotal in happy family life. If you are the only earning member of your family, it's your natural responsibility to spend your income to take care of all the dependents. Upbringing the children is your duty; you must plan and do your best for them. If your parents are also dependent on you, taking care of their health and overall well-being is also your duty. If your wife is not earning, you need to share your income with her to help her



No matter what you have done for yourself, or humanity, if you can't look back on having given love and attention to your own family, what have you really accomplished? - **Elbert Hubbard**



manage all essential expenses of the family, including her own needs. She sacrifices all her time and efforts, all her priorities in making the “sweet home” and efficiently takes care of you and others in the family. You must respect her endeavors and do your level best for her well-being and self-development.

The paradise of family life depends upon the collective efforts of its capable members towards their duties, mutual respect, and support for the healthy progress of everyone in the family. The natural feelings of unconditional love, care, sincerity, honesty (in relationships), and sense of responsibility are foundational traits of spirituality. Expansion of these beyond the selfish attachment with the blood-relations is what accounts for spiritual development. Be generous, be grateful, be wise to rise above your selfish outlook, widen your domain of mutual respect, care, and sharing of responsibilities, compassion, kindness, and service to encompass more and more people who interact with you, work with/for you. If you are a true seeker of spirituality, learn to feel for, to think of the interests and progress of the entire society, as you do for your family. You can (and you must) at least do your level best to encourage

goodwill among others. Whole-heartedly recognize and respect the good qualities of others. Cultivate and spread the tendencies of co-operation and collective efforts for the betterment of all.

### **Real Substance of Spirituality:**

Time and again I would like to remind you that it's not the practice of rituals, but rather, the adoption of spiritual tendencies and observance of the principles of spirituality in conduct that lead to spiritual ascent, enlighten the mind, awaken inner potentials, and make one a great human.

It is pitiable to see you trapped in all sorts of illusions, confusions, and blind convictions in the name of God, in the name of divine ascent by spirituality, etc. Why are you so fascinated by the insane ideas of reaching heavens by doing some rituals of worship, haphazard chanting of some mantras or prayers in praise of some deities? Pause and think! Apply your brains to find out how simply by pouring water, or milk, or putting some leaves of some special plants, etc. on an idol of God, or offering some flowers, coconut, sweets, silver, gold, etc., in some shrine of pilgrimage, will shower the boons and grace of the Almighty, or reserve your tickets in the heavens. Please get rid of all such mindless convictions, blind faith, and superstitions.

History has so many examples, when tyrant invaders like Mahmood Ghaznavi, and Muhammad Ghorī, had attacked and looted the grand historic temples and destroyed even the idols of the main deities there! Why could not the deities save their idols? Why could not the priests, who, according to your ‘convictions’ must have had great spiritual powers because of worshipping the deities every day and doing all sorts of rituals, save the shrines? Open your eyes and minds to realize the facts. The universal truth is that the power of divinity is not there in the idol



An ounce of blood is worth more than a pound of friendship. - Spanish proverb



of a deity; it is not awakened by any rituals. Divinity indwells in the depths of your conscience, purity of your mind, and heart.

Note also that your attempts of doing repeated chants of some great *mantras* hundreds or thousands of times every day would also not yield any spiritual impact, unless you do it with deep meditation while your devotional mind and heart are also engrossed in it. It is not so easy to do that unless your mind and heart are pure, and your devotion is absolute. Attaining all this requires surrender of ego and selfishness. You can achieve this only by living with the values, the disciplines, the principles of spirituality.

### **Foundation of Spirituality – Inculcation of Virtues**

Spirituality pertains to refinement on all dimensions of our being; all fronts of life; it requires refinement of thoughts, character, behavior, attitude, approach to life, method of working, and the inherent tendencies. Nothing less than this defines spirituality; nothing more would be required to attain spirituality.

You might have heard that spirituality leads to the attainment of extraordinary faculties and extrasensory potentials (*siddhis*) and possession of enormous powers and supernatural resources (*riddhis*). Yes, all that is attainable; the grandeur of spirituality is truly great. But, only if it is true spirituality! Spirituality cannot be borrowed; it can't be acquired like a worldly resource. Spiritual progress does not commence without self-awakening and sincere endeavors of self-discipline, self-refinement-uprooting

the evils, the vices, the blemishes, the negative tendencies, etc., and cultivating the virtues, benevolence, and other positive tendencies and qualities. No God, no divine force can bless any boon, shower any grace upon you, despite hundreds of rituals of worship, and so-called religious practices, unless you adopt the righteous approach of spiritual development. Spiritual development will gradually awaken the divinity, and the extraordinary powers and talents hidden in your own inner self.

All this may sound you like mere preaching with impressive words, and imaginations sans any practicability. So, let me try to explain to you further in simpler words and guide you to begin practicing what is being told about the adoption of the tenets of spirituality/spiritual progress. In fact, you may not have realized it, but your practical training (of self-refinement) has already begun with your *sāadhanā* sessions (*shivir*) here.

(To be continued in next issue)

I think the most important thing in life is self-love, because if you don't have self-love, and respect for everything about your own body, your own soul, then how can you have an authentic relationship with anyone else?

- Shailene Woodley



The greatest gifts you can give your children are the roots of responsibility and the wings of independence. - **Denis Waitley**



## Water Conservation

### A Dire Necessity

The news of the onset of rains relieves people from the scorching heat and also attracts their attention towards rainwater harvesting. The time has come to save each drop of rainwater from overcoming the terrible water crisis prevailing across the country. In fact, rainwater harvesting used to be an integral part of the village tradition in the past. The rapid urbanization of villages, however, has led to the tendency of neglecting the old techniques of water harvesting.

It is worth mentioning that globally India is among the regions receiving the highest rainfall. On average, it receives about four thousand billion cubic meters of water every year in the form of rains apart from the water from the melting of glaciers. However, our country can utilize merely 1869 billion cubic meters of rainwater (which is only forty-six percent). The remaining fifty-four percent of the water remains untapped and flows into the sea through drains and rivers. Life is well sustained in countries like

Israel, which are smaller than our state of Manipur and where the average rainfall is even less than twenty-five centimeters. The shortage of water is not felt there owing to the highly evolved water management system in the country. Instead, it is earning foreign exchange by exporting many homegrown agro-products. So why can't India accomplish this?

Conserving and storing rainwater through various techniques is known as 'Rainwater harvesting.' The shortage of water can be minimized in this way by building substantial reserves of water. The availability of drinking water, especially in summer, is a significant problem in India. The level of groundwater is continually receding, and this is further aggravating the shortage of potable water. Shrinking green cover is the chief cause behind this problem.

Trees not only facilitate the proper occurrence of rainfall but also play a pivotal role in maintaining the optimum level of groundwater. But the rapid pace of development has led to a quick disappearance of our green belt. This has not only lowered our groundwater table but has also adversely affected the rate of precipitation. It is noteworthy that about two years back, India had 2.107 million ponds, apart from millions of wells, lakes, pools, and waterfalls. Earlier, we even had thousands of rivers, but today this number has reduced to hundreds. No one knows, where do so many rivers have vanished?



The purest medicine, the best elixir of life, is the single drop of clean water. – Anonymous





The scarcity of clean water in a country where seventy percent of the region is surrounded by water is a grave challenge. Today, sixty million people in our country are facing a severe water crisis. About two hundred thousand people lose their lives every year due to a lack of clean water. This fact has been revealed by the report of the 'Composite Water Management Index' released by NITI Aayog, which states that by 2030, the demand for water would be double to the then existing water resources. This means that there will be a severe water crisis for millions of people, and the nation may witness a six percent decline in its GDP. This problem cannot be solved alone or by a few groups of people. Everyone should contribute to the solution of water conservation to address the impending water scarcity in the future.

Rainwater harvesting is useful in many ways. Rainwater can be utilized for numerous household chores like cleaning, laundry, and cooking. Moreover, it can be used in some processes of industrial use. In summer, the water scarcity arising due to evaporation can be met with 'supplementary water source,' so that the price of bottled water can also be kept constant. If water is appropriately stored in a tank, then we can avoid big bills from the Water Department for water supply throughout the year. At the same time, by collecting rainwater in small mediums, we can prevent catastrophes like floods. Apart from this, rainwater can be used in the construction of buildings, preventing water pollution, irrigation, lavatory, etc. in a better manner.

Several scientific and traditional methods are currently being employed for rainwater harvesting.

Some of these methods and processes are being mentioned here, which can help in storing rainwater –

#### **Surface water collection system -**

This system is used to prevent the water falling on the surface of the earth from seeping into the ground. Examples of this system include rivers, ponds, and wells. Drainage pipes can be used here to channelize water. In this way, water can be obtained from these sources and used for other purposes.

#### **Roof system -**

This is the best and easiest method of rainwater harvesting. The water accumulated from this method can be used without being purified by any other means. In this process, the rain falling on the terrace is stored in containers or tanks. These tanks are usually installed at an elevation, and when the tap is opened, water flows under high pressure.

#### **Check Dams -**

This process of rainwater harvesting is expensive and not feasible at the individual level. Still, the successful construction



Behold! There lies a thin line between using water and wasting water. – **Anonymous**



of dam projects at social and administrative levels can prove quite useful in storing rainwater. Mediums like dams can be employed for storing water for long periods and then using them for irrigation through canals. For this, the government should promptly emphasize on projects of dam construction.

#### **Underground tanks -**

In this system, the water collected on the terrace is collected through pipes into a reservoir built under the ground. Pumps are used to obtain this tank-water when required. Underground tanks are great for harvesting rainwater as it reduces the rate of evaporation.

The demand for water is increasing in India day by day due to its ever-growing population. Various incidents of water shortage occurring now and then keep drawing our attention. Therefore, we should become alert, conscious, and active for water conservation on time so that we do not have to face a water crisis in the future.

## **The Creative Power of Thoughts**

Almighty has given you a Parasmani (magical touchstone) right at the time of birth, and it is such that no one can snatch or steal it. This Parasmani is your faculty of thinking. It has been kept safely in the precious box of the brain. With this invaluable faculty, there is no chance of any trouble falling on you.

Usually, thoughts are considered a matter of useless entertainment, but the reality is that their creative power is infinite. They are a kind of magnet, which attract the circumstances according to their wish. The resources are not available as a gift from anyone; even if they are made available, they will not stay for long. It is one's stomach that digests consumed food and makes life juices. In the same way, one's thought process makes his/her personality. The capabilities are developed according to what is desired or thought.

Realizing the significance of the creativity of thoughts and utilizing them in the righteous direction should be considered as the beginning of good fortune.

**- Puja Gurudev  
Pandit Shriram Sharma Acharya**



Thousands have lived without love, not one without water. – **W.H.Auden**



## Become a ~~True~~ Well-wisher of your Children

Teaching and learning of children is a subtle process, and minimum knowledge of this process is essential for every parent and guardian. In the absence of this understanding, even though parents may work hard to teach their children, the results are not favorable. The children get spoiled, become defiant, and do not listen to them. Then the parents lose faith in them. They start scolding or patronizing children in front of everyone. In such a case, the condition does not improve; instead, it worsens further. It deteriorates to such an extent that any chance for improvement of the children goes out of parents' hands.

It is, therefore, necessary for the parents and guardians to have an understanding of basic child psychology so that the situation mentioned above does not arise. We should realize that the child's mind is like a lump of wet clay, which can be molded in any desired shape. Further, the child is born with some natural inborn talent and originality. We should provide a suitable environment for their development, create situations from which they can learn, and remove the obstacles in this process so that they can learn and grow independently. The key to this is our friendly and sensitive behavior. If this is done, then the child's developmental process will automatically move towards achieving the full potential with which he is born.

The most important thing is that if children make mistakes in the process of learning, they should not

be ridiculed, nor should they be reprimanded. Allow them to learn from their own mistakes. If they still do not understand, then repeatedly explain it to them with love. They should not be afraid of being ridiculed or reprimanded for their mistakes. In this way, they will learn very quickly, and their development will proceed smoothly. Allow them the freedom to agree and disagree freely as their thinking is expanding. Give them the freedom to understand and learn from their life experiences.

They don't need to hold on to the same profession that you or your family is pursuing. Do not forcefully impose your wishes on them. It is the primary duty of every parent and guardian to respect and honor the inborn talent, interests, and needs of the children. The process of child development will be hindered later on if the parents are blocking their children's wishes. Initially, out of pressure from you, they might walk on the path you have shown, but they will



There can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way in which it treats its children. - **Nelson Mandela**



ultimately pick up a profession according to their interest and inborn talent. When this happens, it can then cause a profound shock to the parents, and they accuse their children of arrogance, defiance, or stubbornness. Very few parents could realize that this was bound to happen.

Children are naturally inquisitive. To satisfy their curiosity, they can shower their elders with tons of questions. Elders should try to satisfy their curiosity by answering these questions with exceptional insights and patience. Parents should encourage children's interest, give them proper answers, and encourage them to ask more questions.

Try to provide an appropriate solution to every aspect related to the thing, person, or event that they are curious about. If possible, try to teach them through the use of audio or video, where they can learn by watching and listening. In this way, they will understand the concept more deeply, which will enhance their intellectual growth.

The most important thing is to find time for your children and talk to them. This will increase their awareness, increase their

proficiency in the language, as well as develop an intimate connection with you. Children can be given knowledge about new things through stories. Children especially like stories. Apart from this, new ideas and lessons can be taught to children through songs and riddles. Even more important than this is real-life examples. In particular, the conduct and behavior of parents and guardians are of the utmost importance in teaching life-long lessons to children. Children learn more from what we are doing and not by what we are saying. Therefore we should avoid giving too many lectures and advice to children.

Along with this, you should provide opportunities for children to work independently. Give them the chance to understand life and interact with others. Education and job are not everything in life, as some parents believe. Along with academic qualifications, physical-mental development, intellectual growth, emotional stability, etc. are also essential facets. Most people remain unaware of the most crucial aspect, which is the spiritual growth of children in the form of ethical/moral values and virtues in life.

In this way, parents and guardians must provide a proper environment, create an atmosphere for the well-rounded development of children. It is also imperative to guard them against any obstructing elements in their development. Children are like small plants, which need to be protected from harmful elements in the initial stages. They need to be protected by creating boundaries. When they grow up, then they become so intelligent that they know how to deal with various situations. Until then, their parents need to protect them. Parents who take care of these things are rewarded by the successful overall development of their children.



The greatest legacy one can pass on to one's children, and grandchildren is not money or other material things accumulated in one's life, but rather a legacy of character and faith. - **Billy Graham**





## Generosity: A Sign of Nobility and Maturity

**K**indness is a sign of maturity. Sharing what is ours with others with open hands and without any expectations in return shows the maturity of our inner state. To self-centered and selfish people, generosity may appear as stupidity or frivolity. Still, a giver is both courageous and farsighted and lives his life like a true knower of the art of living.

When the consciousness of a person ascends to a high state, generosity becomes a part of his nature. He becomes restless if he does not give. When a needy person comes around, his compassion begins to flow towards him spontaneously. When the need arises, such munificent people do not stop short of donating everything that belongs to them and performing such prodigious and brave acts that ordinary beings cannot even imagine. In such times these people do not think of any profit or loss. In fact, such persons are never in a loss, even if they seem to be so outwardly. They consider sacrificial acts in times of need as their rightful duty. This gives them great contentment. The satisfaction earned when they wipe tears of sad persons and fulfill their needs gives them great joy. Such acts further strengthen them at the emotional level. Munificent people regard every individual as God's creation; to them serving aggrieved, needy, and poor become acts of serving the Almighty.

The absolute karmic principle of 'Sow and Reap' also applies. In this vast universe, whenever we sow a seed of generousness, it sprouts and bears fruits in time. A

grain of wheat grows into a plant and then creates hundreds of wheat grains. Likewise, when we sow good seed by donating in society with goodwill and feelings of cooperation, empathy, and support, it fructifies in numerous ways in time. This is what is known as the bearing of fruits of good deeds.

A wise person understands this principle of the unfolding of karma. Insight into the science of karma makes a person spontaneously generous. He sows his time, energy, resources, wealth, ability, talent, influence, and good qualities with open hands in the field of human society and like a farsighted farmer, leaves the outcome of his deeds in God's hands but remains trustful that they will bear good results in time. No one can stop the karma of good deeds from producing excellent results in any case. Generosity is the quality of a wise, farsighted, and mature person. He naturally becomes a rightful recipient of true happiness, peace, and joy in life.



Generosity is the most natural outward expression of an inner attitude of compassion and loving-kindness. - **Dalai Lama**





Glimpses of preparing food packets and their distribution to the homeless and needy people



'Disaster management unit' of Shantikunj, Haridwar at work during Corona Pandemic



# Akhand Jyoti

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Shantikunj, Haridwar donated Rupees One Crore to Chief Minister's Relief Fund (U.K.) for the eradication of Corona pandemic.



Disciplined participation of the residents of Shantikunj, Haridwar in different activities on the call of Honorable Prime Minister of India

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